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NOVEMBER 1981

Vol.1 No.4

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Computer art
ZX-81 books

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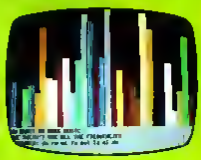

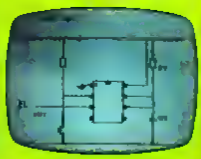

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Cover photograph by Stephen Oliver Our thanks go to Data Applications for the use of their computer to generate the music

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EDITORIAL

WHY DON'T GIRLS compute? There still seems to be a popular feeling that computers are terrifically technical and whoever understands them or even manages to use one at home, must be some kind of weird boffin Boys' stuff, so the myths tell us Luckily the myth is in the process of being blown away More than 20,000 computers are being sold each month in Britain, largely thanks to Clive Sinclair, it would be hard to maintain that we are finding another 20,000 boffins every four weeks Yet of those 20,000 newcomers to the market each month the vast majority are still boys

It is hard to tell whether parents deliberately buy computers for their sons rather than their daughters, or whether it is the sons who demand of their parents that they have a computer for their birthdays Whichever it is, the girls are not computing

At the recent ZX Micro Faire in London, the girls were outnumbered by approximately 100 to one Parents must take a certain amount of the blame for this — perhaps they still feel that it is not quite proper for girls to compute If that is the case, they are doing the next generation of girls a great disfavour For the up-and coming generation a knowledge of how computers work will be of immense value when looking for work in today's bleak job climate Being able to program a Sinclair ZX machine is obviously no qualification for a job but at least it opens one's eyes to the possibility of learning how to program to a professional standard Maybe some will even be sufficiently encouraged to try and start their own software companies there are already many precedents of young entrepreneurs earning more from their hobbies than their parents do in their full time job

The other culprits are the schools It is often in schools that the segregation between the arts and the sciences, between the girls and the boys, begins in earnest The boys are sent to the science laboratories and the girls are left with the so-called soft options. The result is seen at every computer exhibition.

It is the teachers, not the girls, who are responsible for advising parents that the best chance of academic success for their daughters lies in languages, biology and domestic science Part of the problem is that computing is not yet regarded as a soft option Learning the 100-odd key words in the vocabulary of Basic is a doddle compared to mastering the intricate irregularities of French, Spanish or German Let's tell the teachers to think again ■

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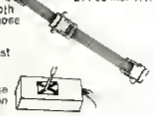

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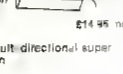

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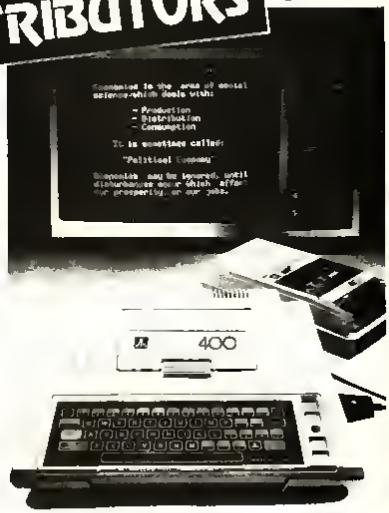

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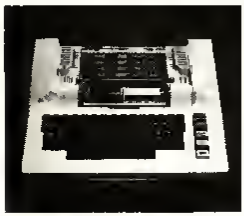

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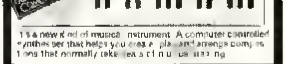

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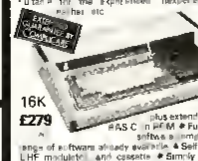

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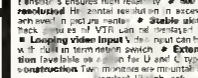

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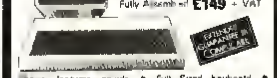

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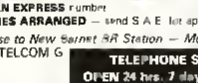

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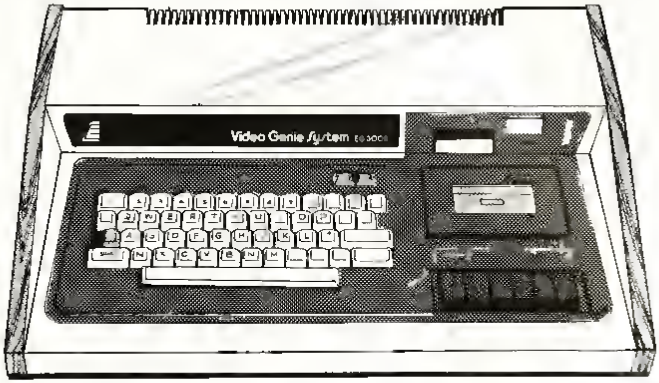

Are you a home enthusiast taking your first tentative steps into the enthralling world of micro-computers? If so the Video Genie is the ideal complete system for you!

It's a real micro-computer, not a pocket one yet it only needs connecting to a domestic TV set to produce superb results

The Genie is compatible with the popular TRS 80 16K level 2 the best selling computer of all time As well as its lower price the Genie offers an in built cassette deck 16K RAM 12K ROM with BASIC interpreter, full size keyboard and a stylish carrying case So it is not only excellent value for money but an ideal "First computer" on which to learn programming

There are literally 1000's of pre-recorded programs available, including educational, leisure and small-business applications and simple BASIC language means you can write your own programs with ease

Extended BASIC.

The Microsoft extended BASIC has many powerful features including double precision variables scientific functions formatted printing extended editing sub-commands automatic line numbering multiple dimensional arrays complete string manipulation, direct access to graphics and machine language sub-routines

Memory.

The Genie EG 3003 model has 16K of internal RAM expandable externally to 48K using the special Expansion unit 12K of ROM contains the Microsoft BASIC

Cassette.

Two cassette interfaces are provided for both the internal and an external cassette unit

CPU.

The machine uses the industry Standard Z80 micro-processor.

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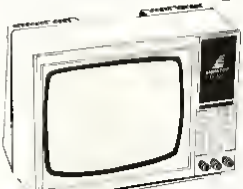
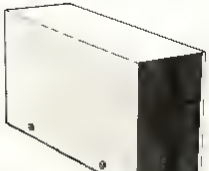


Expander.

The expansion box unleashes the full possibilities of the Genie. It contains a selection of interfaces allowing the connection of up to 48K RAM, 4 disk drives, printers and S100 cards

Disk Drive.

As well as the obvious advantage of mass-storage the addition of the disk system to the Genie means much faster access to other languages and full random access file handling. Up to 4 drives can be used on a system.



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The Complete BASIC Course has over 240 pages filled with information in an attractive durable ring binder – this is a lay flat work of reference that deserves a place next to every Sinclair ZX 81 microcomputer.

OTHER TITLES AVAILABLE

Melbourne House is the world's leading publisher of books and software for the Sinclair ZX 81.

The following titles are also available if you wish to expand your horizons.

BASIC Course Programs on Cassette -

All major programs in the BASIC Course are available pre-recorded in this set of cassettes. This is a valuable adjunct to the Course, saving you time and effort.

Not Only 30 Programs for the Sinclair ZX 81 1K -

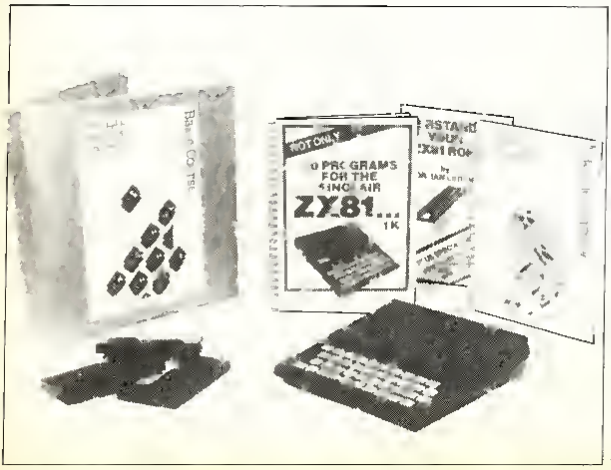
Not only over 30 programs, from arcade games to the final challenging Draughts playing program which all fit into the unexpanded 1K Sinclair ZX 81 but also notes on how these programs were written and special tips! Great value!

Machine Language Programming Made Simple for the Sinclair -

A complete beginner's guide to the computer's own language – Z80 machine language. Machine language programs enable you to save on memory and typically give you programs than run 10-30 times faster than BASIC programs.

Understanding Your ZX 81 ROM -

A brilliant guide for more experienced programmers by Dr Ian Logan. This book illustrates the Sinclair's own operating system and how you can use it. Includes special section on how to use machine code routines in your BASIC programs.



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YOUR LETTERS

MEMORY THRIFT

Responding to Mike Howard's letter in the August/September Software File here are a few points concerning memory economy which ZX 81 and 8K ROM ZX 80 owners may find useful.

Firstly, by evaluating numbers as strings,

10 LET A = 1234

consumes 18 bytes and

10 LET A = VAL "1234"

takes 15. They are both equivalent lines, although the second is slower than the first and three bytes are saved every time a number is evaluated in this way.

Secondly, although the numbers one and zero which necessarily proliferate in most programs can be evaluated as shown it is more convenient to use SGN PI for one, and Not PI for zero — saving four bytes each time they are used.

Finally, certain small whole numbers can be expressed as character codes. For example

10 GOTO 200

can be replaced with

10 GOTO CODE "COS"

saving five bytes. Replaceable numbers can be found in appendix A of the ZX 81 manual.

Using these techniques, a 1K ZX 81/8K ROM ZX 80 user may expect to fit, on average, an extra 100-200 bytes into the full computer.

Kevin Hill,
Halesowen,
West Midlands

ZX-81 BLACK SPOT

I have a black spot in my ZX 81 16K RAM pack. It is a pixel which begins appearing within days of delivery, whenever I switched on. It is always in the same place, just ahead of the K cursor. I have pinned it down to co-ordinates 63,15 but it refuses to stay unplotted.

It has friends which occur here and there while listing a loaded program or inputting a new one — sometimes four, occasionally six. And whenever an input character, whether from memory or keyboard, coincides with one of them, it is like Space Invaders — the input character actually changes, confuses the computer and throws up an error report.

The result is total frustration and absolutely no progress. You might not believe the report codes I obtain on trying to load, say, the Sinclair business utilities programs. The 'Telephone' one refuses to run — persistently giving report code c/250. Every listing of programs I can load is plastered by two or three lines of pulsating pixels down screen.

Sinclair Research warns of possible initial 'non-communication' being experienced with the ZX-81 shortly after introducing the 16K RAM pack. The company advised me to return mine for repair. Did I do something wrong or do I just have a bad RAM pack?

Brian Harrison,
Redcar,
Cleveland.

SINCLAIR CRITIC

Clive Sinclair is a great experimenter and innovator and an asset to the industry, but I find his criticism of the BBC in the August/September issue considerably out of place. He has more than proved his worth with his ideas, but as a business executive he has, in my view, shown a complete lack of understanding towards his customers.

In any organisation involved with selling to the public a supplier has to organise adequate means of dealing with queries and faults. In this matter Sinclair has fallen well below the accepted standard and I have joined the large body of customers who have tried to contact his firm by telephone without result, and letters would be answered with greater speed if replies were conveyed by foot. This, coupled with the large number of complaints about faulty items would suggest that he has had more success than perhaps he deserves.

I certainly wish him and his company well, but if the BBC had been involved with his method of supplying customers, I am sure that its very important programme would never have been able to expect the success that I am very sure it will have.

C Brewer,
Hove,
East Sussex.

FUTURE OF VIC

In the August/September 1981 issue, Tim Hartnell and Trevor Sharples answer a letter from G Howell in Response Frame concerning the Vic 20 being upgraded to 40 columns. The answer given is extremely misleading.

It is unlikely that Vic will be upgraded to 40 columns with a replacement ROM. The reasons are very straightforward. In its present configuration the Vic uses 512bytes of RAM for the screen memory and an additional 512bytes — one for the colour of each of the 512 screen locations.

While it is quite possible for the second 512bytes to be adapted to accept the character colours for 1,000 locations — using one nybble per location instead of one byte — the screen memory would have to be expanded at the expense of user available RAM.

Another factor is the 6561 Vic chip itself. This chip was designed for a 22 by 23 screen size and a new Vic chip will be required to drive 40 columns — the 6563.

When the Vic-40 arrives, it is much more likely to be an entirely new machine and it is unlikely that an upgrade will be supplied for the Vic 20.

On a slightly different tack, I would like to correct a few of the points which appeared in Nick Hampshire's excellent article on the Vic.

- 3.5K of RAM is user available on the Vic as supplied, not 3.5K as stated. 1K is used for normal stack, variable storage and operating system scratchpad, 5K is used for screen memory. There is an additional 5K of RAM in the machine which is used for character colour storage so the total RAM in the Basic machine is 5.5K.
- Obviously, in the light of this the 3K RAM pack expands the system to 6.5K.
- The Vic disc drive will be read/write-compatible with 4040 discs and only read-compatible with 3040 discs. Obviously, there will be no interchangeability with the 8050 discs.
- The interface to the low-cost printer and floppy disc unit is not IEEE 488 or even a partial implementation of it. It is an out-and-out serial bus far which, as far as I am aware, there is no standard specification outside Commodore.
- While it is true that the 6502 in the Vic is the 2MHz version the clock rate is only 1.1064MHz — the PAL subcarrier of 4.43361 divided by four. The processor is, therefore, running faster but not twice as fast.

David Briggs,
Technical Support Manager,
Commodore Business Machines (U.K.) Ltd.

DEVICE PROPOSAL

First of all, I find *Your Computer* by far the best periodical in its field. It is full of very good, unbiased reviews, and a great deal of information presented in a readable and intelligible form, so that anyone who is fascinated by micro-computers, but as yet does not possess one, can understand most of what is being said.

I would like to draw attention to a device I have just bought for £14.99. It is a small video game with its own integral, liquid-crystal screen. The contrast on the 32mm by 42mm screen is good enough to read the 2.75mm by 2mm, numbers with ease.

Could not a screen such as this, be used as the VDU of a small, pocket-sized computer? Such a device would have a full keyboard, and plenty of room within it to store plug in ROM and RAM modules. Its power consumption would also be low.

I can think of two very important applications for such a device as a communication device for the deaf/dumb, containing pre-programmed, oft used phrases available at the touch of a key, and secondly, as a portable database, using ROM for such uses as intelligent dictionary/encyclopaedia searching, and RAM for use as a diary/data-file.

D Austin,
Newcastle under Lyme,
Staffordshire.

TANTEL REALITY

Your reviewer of the Tantel unit does not seem to have used it under practical conditions. As supplied, it is useless in the home and in many offices — the leads are far too short.

I complained to Tantel and was supplied with longer leads. Perhaps Peter Flower can suggest how one connects it to the home TV in one corner of the room and sits in the other controlling it while the children run around in between.

Another point is that the Post Office fitter suggested that he install the jack next to the TV. That is the last place for it, it should be placed next to where one sits as should a power socket.

Many people buying this unit are going to be greatly disappointed because of these difficulties even though otherwise, it gives excellent results.

R G Silson,
Tring,
Hertfordshire.

DISTURBING NEWS

While undertaking one of my rare journeys from my hermitage in north Wales, I happened to buy the second issue of *Your Computer* from a small newsagent on the outskirts of Bristol. After browsing through the articles, I found myself becoming disturbed by the apparent lack of rubbish normally found in computer magazines.

My usual equanimity was finally shattered when I read the editorial. The opinions expressed there, if I may speak frankly, are no less than revolutionary — not to mention enlightened. I found your attack on the pettiness of the mass conditioned mind shocking and your distribe on our state educational attitudes delightful.

Perhaps, as a disillusioned ex-teacher I am biased, but I am surprised that someone as clear thinking as the editor should have been allowed to attain such a responsible position. Your magazine is showing many signs of attempting to produce quality rather than popularity — can it survive in the commercial market? I hope you are not concerned with making a million and can escape the inevitable pressures for financial success.

G Goldsack
Barmouth, Gwynedd.

ZX user port defies sceptics

THE SCEPTICS said it could not be done, but a user port has been developed for the ZX 81. It consists of a single board which plugs into the rear of the world's most popular microcomputer to provide an eight bit input port and an eight bit output port, both of which are controlled directly from Basic or machine code.

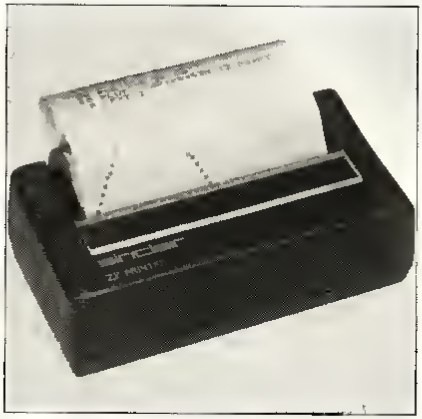
Sound and music are now possible on the ZX 81 — achieved by the addition of a loudspeaker on one of the output bits. The frequency range is from 200Hz to 25KHz, and an accompanying booklet is provided to tell the user how to create sound effects.

Each of the eight output channels may be used to control a separate device, for example LED indicators or relays. The eight input lines may be connected to games paddles, microswitches or detectors. It is conceivable that some users may

want to connect their machines to remote keyboards via this port.

The booklet contains several applications including an electronic organ, a reaction timer, an electronic combination lock and many more. A complete kit of parts costs £11.50, and the booklet a further 40p. VAT and postage are extra. The ZX 81 user port is available from Technomatic, 17 Burnley Road, London NW10. Telephone 01-452 1500.

Printer for the Sinclairs



THE LONG-AWAITED Sinclair ZX printer is now available, and like the ZX range of microcomputers, the product is both technically advanced and economical. At only £49.50 including VAT the printer will be well received by the thousands of Sinclair microcomputer owners.

The printer is in the same style as the ZX 81. That is a black, hard plastic case — and will fit directly on to the micro. It will also work in conjunction with a new ROM ZX 80. The printer is very small — no larger than two cassette packs — and it interfaces via the connector on the back of the computer.

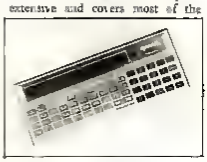
A special feature of the printer is the Copy command which prints out exactly what is on the screen. A simple copy instruction at 14 seconds costs less than one penny. There are also the more traditional printer commands such as LList and LPrint.

There are 32 characters to the line and nine lines to the inch on the special aluminised paper the printer uses. Special paper is required because the printer uses a technique known as thermal printing where the paper turns black at the points where heat is applied.

Company with Sharp bias

OWNERS OF the Sharp PC 1211 pocket computer will be interested to hear of Elkan Electronics, a company which specialises in the Sharp, providing both hardware and software. Hardware is in the shape of the computer itself, the CE 122 printer and cassette interface, as well as paper rolls to use in it.

Software available is quite extensive and covers most of the



more common applications. There is a ledger program for use by accountants, and a PAYE program, both of which cost £14.95 and include documentation.

Other software includes a Cassl interpreter, a whole series of games of which the most interesting is a draughts game which costs £3, a loan calculator, Focus — a program for photographers — a taxi fare calculator and scientific packages.

For further details contact Barry Elkan at Elkan Electronics, 28 Bury New Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 0JD.

Speech synthesis to have wider audience

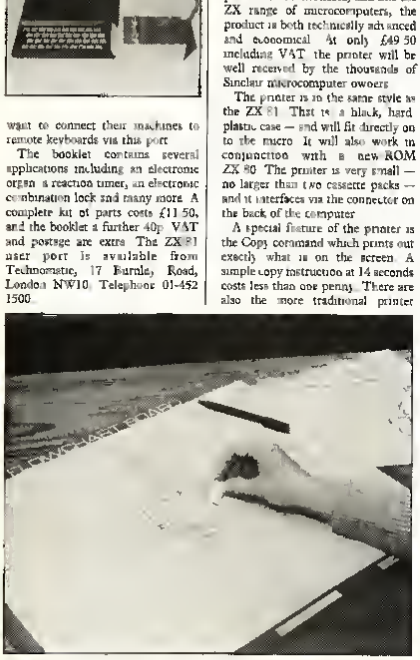
ONE OF the more exciting developments in the last year has been the introduction of speech synthesisers for microcomputers. Now such exotic peripherals are about to become commonplace with the introduction of the Arfon Micro-electronics Speech Synthesiser Board.

Designed originally to interface directly with the Nascom micro via the Nasbus, the synthesiser will now interface with a variety of common microcomputers. The board itself sells for £85 plus VAT and can be used in that form with the Nascom and the Apple.

At £120 a boxed system is available for any computer with the RS 232 interface, together with systems for the Pet, Tandy and Video Genie microcomputers. The Pet system should also be suitable for the Vic 20.

The board is based on the proven National Semiconductor Digitalker chip set, with two 64K ROMs containing a vocabulary of 256 words and sub-sounds. An on board speaker is provided so that speaking can begin as soon as the board is plugged in, but for better quality, a mono jack plug is fitted so that the speech can be output via the user's stereo system.

Arfon Microelectronics Ltd, Cilwyn Industrial Estate, Gwynedd, Wales. Telephone 0286-5005.



It is sometimes a good idea to use flowcharts before writing programs. Not everyone believes in it, partly because it can become very tedious. Here the programmer is using a laminated plastic work board and sheet of self cling PVC printed with the full set of British Standard flowchart symbols. The PVC sheets can be lifted and placed on the board. Notations and flowlines can be added with a write-on wipe-off pen so that an alteration needs only to be wiped away and the correction inserted. The total cost, including postage and packing, is £26. Details can be obtained from the suppliers Flowchart Systems, Datarite House, Grafton Road, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3AA. Telephone 01 942 2830

Of peripheral interest

HARDWARE AND software products including a motherboard and a sound board designed to complement the Sinclair microcomputers have been unveiled by ZX specialists Quicksilva. The QS Motherboard is a device which enables the user to expand a ZX microcomputer.

It takes the form of a PCB which contains onboard 5 V power supply, sockets to accept add-on boards and a PCB edge connector for fitting extra RAM packs. The motherboard must be connected to the computer via a QS connector. Prices are £3 for the connector and £10 for the motherboard.

Another hardware add-on for ZX microcomputers is the QS sound board which can play tunes in three-part harmony. It is based on the AY 3-8910 sound generator chip and features software control from Basic of all the chip's facilities. There are also two eight bit input/output ports.

All generated sound can be accessed via a jack socket on the board which can be connected to an amplifier. The QS sound board costs £25 which includes programming.

Software from Quicksilva is in the form of two games, QS Life and QS Defender. The version of the evergreen computer game Life will work only on a ZX-81 or a ZX 80 which has been modified for flicker-free graphics and will cost you £4.50. QS Defender is a version of the arcade game and includes software to drive the QS soundboard.

Quicksilva can be contacted at 95 Upper Brownhill Road, Maybush, Southampton, Hampshire.

A handful of power

THE CASIO FX-702P is a hand held calculator which can be programmed in the Basic language. Capable of handling complex and lengthy programs, the FX-702P has a neat alpha numeric display which means you can display words as well as numbers.

The machine can hold up to 10 programs with subroutines nested up to 10 levels. Program looping can exist at up to eight levels. You can split the storage between memories and program steps, and the capacity varies between 1,680 steps with 26 memories and 80 steps with 226 memories.

There are 55 single key routines covering logarithmic, trigonometric and hyperbolic functions. The statistical routines include two types of standard-deviation and regression analysis as well as correlation coefficient. There are string handling facilities, and a random number generator. All such functions can be used in the program as the immediate mode.

The LCD is capable of displaying 10 digits, plus two for the exponent, and a program line can be up to 30 alpha numeric characters long. When listing programs, the lines cycle through the display automatically.

The power is produced by lithium batteries, which keep the FX-702P running for 240 hours of continuous operation.

The computer has a recommended retail price of £134.95, and is supplied complete with instruction booklet and a program library. Contact Casio Electronics Ltd, 28 Scrutton Street, London EC2A 4TY. Telephone 01-377 9087.

Kenneth Baker, Minister for Information Technology, recently launched the second Department of Industry Schools Computer Competition. Open to all secondary schools and sixth form colleges, the competition has 100 microcomputers to give away as prizes. The competition is being run for the Department of Industry by the British Computer Society. Entrants will be asked to submit an essay of 3,000 to 4,000 words, together with appropriate illustrations and diagrams, describing the use of a microcomputer for a project involving students. Entry applications should be sent to the BCS Project Office, 13 Mansfield Street, London W1E 2YZ before Friday, January 15, 1982.

Cancer tragedy of micro fan

PROCEEDS FROM the sales of the new backgammon program being sold by Bug-Byte Software, will be going to help leukaemia research.

Kevan Earl, a 10-year-old microcomputer fan from Bolton wrote the program while he was in hospital receiving treatment for leukaemia. He asked Bug-Byte to market the program and they agreed. Three days after signing the agreement, Kevan died.

The young programmer's father wrote to Bug-Byte requesting that the royalties Kevan would have received should be sent to leukaemia research. Normally this would be 20 percent of the revenue, in fact Bug-Byte agreed to give half of all proceeds. The program costs £7 and can be obtained from Bug-Byte, on 100 The Albany, Old Hall Street, Liverpool L3 9EP.

Nascom Basic is extended

TWO MAJOR new extensions to Nascom Basic are now available on cassette. They are a Basic expander and a double-precision package which requires the expander to run.

The double-precision, floating point arithmetic is to 14 decimal places. It is available for those machines fitted with NasSys and the 8K Basic ROM. The Basic expander will cost around £5 and the double-precision arithmetic about £15. For details send SAE to Mike York, 9 Rosehill Road, London SW18. Telephone 01-874 6244.

WH Smith advances into computer world

JOHN ROWLAND the market development manager at W H Smith, the nationwide magazine and newspaper retailer, has launched into the precarious world of selling micro computers.

In a recent agreement, W H Smith has undertaken to offer the best-selling Sinclair ZX-81 microcomputer at more than 100 high street branches.

At the same time, Boots the chemists has decided to market microcomputers as well. For the moment, both companies will be treating the exercise as an experiment. If the W H Smith venture is successful, then after Christmas the Vic 20 will be brought in to broaden the range of machines available.

Boots is to market the Texas Instruments TI-99/4 microcomputer in six city-centre branches, Manchester, Croydon, Cardiff, Swansea, Ilford and Leicester. If the operation is a success then both the range of equipment and the number of outlets will grow.

Yet is it not strange for a chemist chain to sell microcomputers? Aubery Ridley-Thompson, a director of Boots does not agree. He points out that Boots were the first multiple-outlet store to market pocket calculators more than 10 years ago, and the company is well established as a retailer of audio equipment.

The marketing people at Boots reckon that microcomputers will be a very big market, and at £299 a time, the Texas computer should find its way into many homes. W H Smith too realises the enormous potential — hence a massive entry into the high street microcomputer market. Whatever the outcome of the two experiments, it is inevitable that this is only the beginning.

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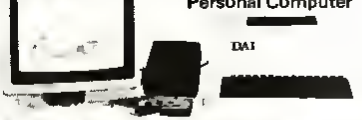

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The unprecedented popularity of the ZX Series of Sinclair Personal Computers has generated a large volume of programs written by users.

Sinclair has undertaken to publish the most elegant of these on pre-recorded cassettes. Each program is carefully vetted for interest and quality, and then grouped with other programs to form a single-subject cassette.

Each cassette costs £3.95 (including VAT and p&p) and comes complete with full instructions.

Although primarily designed for the Sinclair ZX81, many of the cassettes are suitable for running on a Sinclair ZX80 – if fitted with a replacement 8K BASIC ROM.

Some of the more elaborate programs can be run only on a Sinclair ZX Personal Computer augmented by a 16K-byte add-on RAM pack.

This RAM pack and the replacement ROM are described below. And the description of each cassette makes it clear what hardware is required.

8K BASIC ROM

The 8K BASIC ROM used in the ZX81 is available to ZX80 owners as a drop-in replacement chip. With the exception of animated graphics, all the advanced features of the ZX81 are now available on a ZX80 – including the ability to run much of the Sinclair ZX Software.

The ROM chip comes with a new keyboard template, which can be overlaid on the existing keyboard in minutes, and a new operating manual.

16K-BYTE RAM pack

This 16K-byte RAM pack provides 16 times more memory in one complete module. Compatible with the ZX81 *and* the ZX80, it can be used for program storage or as a database.

The RAM pack simply plugs into the existing expansion port on the rear of a Sinclair ZX Personal Computer.

Cassette 1 – Games

For ZX81 (and ZX80 with 8K BASIC ROM)

ORBIT – your spacecraft's mission is to pick up a very valuable cargo that's in orbit around a star.

SNIPER – you're surrounded by 40 of the enemy. How quickly can you spot and shoot them when they appear?

METEORS – your starship is cruising through space when you meet a meteor storm. How long can you dodge the deadly danger?

LIFE – J H Conway's 'Game of Life' has achieved tremendous popularity in the computing world. Study the life, death and evolution patterns of cells.

WOLFPACK – your naval destroyer is on a submarine hunt. The depth charges are armed, but must be fired with precision.

GOLF – what's your handicap? It's a tricky course but you control the strength of your shots.

Cassette 2 – Junior Education: 7-11-year-olds

For ZX81 with 16K RAM pack

CRASH – simple addition – with the added attraction of a car crash if you get it wrong.

MULTIPLY – long multiplication with five levels of difficulty. If the answer's wrong, the solution is explained.

TRAIN – multiplication tests against the computer. The winner's train reaches the station first.

FRACTIONS – fractions explained at three levels of difficulty. A ten-question test completes the program.

ADDSUB – addition and subtraction with three levels of difficulty. Again, wrong answers are followed by an explanation.

DIVISION – with five levels of difficulty. Mistakes are explained graphically, and a running score is displayed.

SPELLING – up to 500 words over five levels of difficulty. You can even change the words yourself.

Cassette 3 – Business and Household

For ZX81 (and ZX80 with 8K BASIC ROM) with 16K RAM pack

TELEPHONE – setup your own computerised telephone directory and address book. Changes, additions and deletions of up to 50 entries are easy.

NOTE PAD – a powerful easy-to-run system for storing and retrieving every day information. Use it as a diary, a catalogue, a reminder system, or a directory.

BANK ACCOUNT – a sophisticated financial recording system with comprehensive documentation. Use it at home to keep track of "where the money goes" and at work for expenses, departmental budgets, etc.

Cassette 4 – Games

For ZX81 (and ZX80 with 8K BASIC ROM) and 16K RAM pack

LUNAR LANDING – bring the lunar module down from orbit to a soft landing. You control attitude and orbital direction – but watch the fuel gauge! The screen displays your flight status digitally and graphically.

TWENTY ONE – a dice version of Blackjack.

COMBAT – you're on a suicide space mission. You have only 12 missiles but the aliens have unlimited strength. Can you take 12 of them with you?

SUBSTRIKE – on patrol, your frigate detects a pack of 10 enemy subs. Can you depth-charge them before they torpedo you?

CODEBREAKER – the computer thinks of a 4-digit number which you have to guess in up to 10 tries. The logical approach is best!

MAYDAY – in answer to a distress call, you've narrowed down the search area to 343 cubic kilometers of deep space. Can you find the astronaut before his life-support system fails in 10 hours time?

Cassette 5 – Junior Education: 9-11-year-olds

For ZX81 (and ZX80 with 8K BASIC ROM)

MATHS – tests arithmetic with three levels of difficulty, and gives your score out of 10.

BALANCE – tests understanding of levers, fulcrum theory with a series of graphic examples.

VOLUMES – 'yes' or 'no' answers from the computer to a series of cube volume calculations.

AVERAGES – what's the average height of your class? The average shoe size of your family? The average pocket money of your friends? The computer plots a bar chart, and distinguishes MEAN from MEDIAN.

BASES – convert from decimal (base 10) to other bases of your choice in the range 2 to 9.

TEMP – Volumes, temperatures – and then combinations.

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Computer Club is here to encourage you to start your own local computer club or, if one already exists, to join it and become involved. Each month we will devote the page to new ideas from local clubs. We would like to hear of anything which has made a club a success, or of any projects or programs you are developing.

Oxford Computer Workshop

David Pollard found that a surfeit of academics does not necessarily help in bringing computers to those who can use them. He describes the workshop's progress to date.

WHEN IT was started in June this year, the idea behind the Oxford Computer Workshop was to create a computing forum whose primary purpose was to help disabled people — something between social club and a factory. The reckoning was that it could just about pay its own way — with mail-order software, word processing and introductory courses. Later it would grow to design and develop equipment to aid people with specific disabilities.

By providing facilities and a suitable environment, products should evolve to suit particular needs. Surprisingly, it seems that there are but two such workshops in the U.K. — the Professional Workshop at Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and the Notting Dale Technology Centre in London.

Early hopes of governmental assistance were soon dashed. Manpower and the Small Firms' Advisory Service were very friendly, made encouraging noises and said, politely, that they could not help.

There is a standard Catch 22 — until you achieve something and have something positive to show, they cannot really help, by the time you have done whatever it is, you probably do not need their help anyway. One is sometimes left with a sneaking suspicion that they might be happier dealing with schemes at the level of several £100,000.

Another obstacle — perhaps peculiar to Oxford with its surfeit of academics — was the disbelief of people in authority that anyone might want to use computers: after all, you can employ somebody who does that.

It became clear that the way ahead with the workshop project for disabled people was to form a local interest group, and in recent weeks, there has been progress. Several people have offered to help and the local computer retailers have promised to do what they can. A good friend who is going abroad has offered the use of his TRS 80.

It looks as though all the constituent parts are to hand, including a Sharp, a Pet, an Apple and the use of a word processor and a mainframe machine — enough machines to stimulate interest.

A workshop became available through the Bakehouse Trust — an Oxford group which is providing rental of workshop space to new small businesses at a realistic price. There is a carpenter, electronics engineer, upholsterer, wood carver, architectural designer and now a computer.

You might raise the idea of using micros to make life better for disabled people at your next club meeting. If there is no local club, try to start one — you will be surprised to learn how many people own a micro and want advice on how to use it. There are yet more who would like to gain hands-on experience before buying their own.

First, you cannot do it all on your own, so find a few people of like mind who will help you. A small poster in the local library or community centre or perhaps a letter to the local newspaper will do the trick.

Word of mouth is effective initially. The nearest computer retailers will probably be interested enough to bring a machine to the meetings. Enlist the help of your library, adult-education centre and citizens' advice bureau.

As for premises: the church hall or community centre is probably the best bet. A few pounds will cover the cost of hire of a room, a few posters, postage and telephone calls.

The national users' groups should be able to help with useful and appropriate software. Enclose a large stamped, addressed envelope with enquiries — some of them send sample newsletters.

There are two further requirements — enthusiasm and perseverance. It may take a few weeks to get the project off the ground, so do not be discouraged if it seems to be going slowly at first. ■

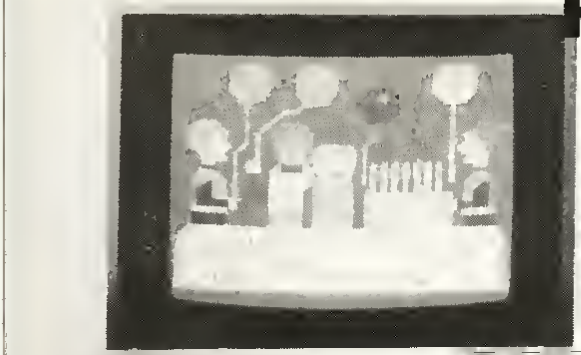
Above: The workshop has found house room through the Old Bakehouse Trust, where it shares space with a number of small businesses. The premises are relatively cheap and provide a useful mix of skills.

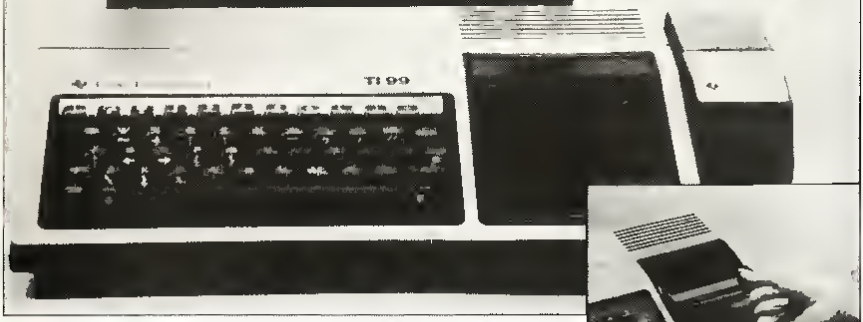
Right: David Pollard at the bench. Friendly local dealers and other supporters have provided equipment to start the workshop.

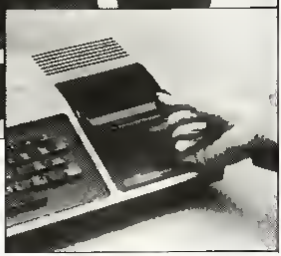
REVIEW

TI~99/4

Now that its price has been cut from around £1,000 to £295, the two year old colour computer from Texas Instruments looks set to compete with the likes of Tandy's colour machine and the Vic-20. Tim Hartnell assesses the re-launched machine.







THE TEXAS Instruments Home Computer, the TI 99/4, is a computer which seems to have missed its market. First launched about 18 months ago for around £1 000, it has been re-released recently for a quarter of the original price. The TI 99/4 now shows its age. It is an "old" computer, without the kind of features and facilities—such as Peek, Poke and the USR function—now taken for granted on most personal computers.

Despite this, it is magnificently supported by plug-in cartridge firmware, which includes the best chess program I have seen for a game marketed specifically with one computer. The TI 99/4 has an impressive range of peripherals including floppies, speech and a quality printer.

It has an uncomplicated exterior, with a slot for peripherals on the right-hand side. The plug-in software, or command modules as Texas Instruments calls them, slides in near the top right-hand corner. A speaker is built in with a slide volume control below it. I found the keyboard perfectly satisfactory, although the keys are closer to those found on large calculators than on electric typewriters.

The on board Basic is somewhat limited without, as I mentioned, such facilities as Peek and Poke, yet the superb colour and wide range of sound, compensates for this. An extended Basic cartridge will give you every command you would normally expect.

My main criticism of the machine is that it is very slow, as slow in fact as a ZX 81 operating in the Slow mode. Listing a program seems to take an age as the program is printed out a letter at a time.

The display is impressive. When you first turn on and a series of coloured blocks appear rather like a colour TV test pattern run across the top and bottom of the screen in strips, with a Texas Instruments logo and the words HOME COMPUTER. PRESS ANY KEY TO BEGIN. When you press a key, the screen clears to a blue background, and black letters on the background outline a menu which says:

PRESS
1 FOR TI BASIC
2 FOR EQUATION CALCULATOR

This is followed by the number 3, if you have a command module plugged in, and the title of the module. If there is more than one program on the module, the additional programs appear beneath the third item on the menu.

Equation Calculator allows you to use the TI 99/4 in the direct mode as a calculator. It has a rather strange display, an open rectangle filling most of the screen, with the numbers you enter appearing at the bottom. The rectangle displays assigned variables, so you have a constant reminder if, for example, you have set A equal to 10.

Refer it to the switch on display, which you must do to use the Basic after using the Equation Calculator, you just type 'bye', hit Return and you are back at the beginning.

The cursor is a small flashing rectangle. The computer will accept any line, including invalid ones, but will — of course — crash on running if the line is invalid, with one of a number of cute error messages, such as CAN'T DO THAT or the extraordinary BAD VALUE if a number is generated out of range, or outside designated parameters.

When you type Run and press Return, the display changes from black on blue which is programming mode to black on green or run mode. If the program crashes, the display immediately switches back to black on blue. When you enter Run, the listing stays on the screen except that it scrolls upward. The command Call Clear clears the screen.

The Let statement is optional to assign variables, and the TI 99/4 will accept any name up to 15 characters long. The built in sound box is very flexible. The command Call Sound

will generate tones from 110Hz to more than 44,000Hz. That is, from the A below middle C on a piano, to much, much higher than the ear can hear.

As well as this wide range of sound, there are 30 graduations of volume. If you enter

```
CALL SOUND (1000, 440, 2)
```

then press Enter you hear a very clear, pure middle C for a second.

The Call Sound command is very flexible. The first figure after the command is the duration of the note in milliseconds, the second is the frequency, and the third is the volume which is adjustable from zero to 30, with 30 being the loudest. A routine to write an infinitely varied cacophony is

```
10 D = INT(RND*1000) + 110
20 F = (INT(RND*4) + 1)*220
30 V = 2 + INT(RND*25)
40 CALL SOUND (D,F,V)
50 GOTO 10
```

You can easily modify this program to play two or three notes, plus noise, at a time. In other words, there are four independent sound channels. While attempting to write a program to generate three-note chords, I managed one of the few system crashes I experienced while using the TI 99/4.

As I was modifying the program, I suddenly lost my listing, and the screen started to flash on and off. I entered

```
SHIFT Q
```

to return to the opening display as instructed in the manual, and even though I did reach the initial display, the computer stuck at this point. I had to turn it off before I could use it again.

The display is 28 letters across and 24 down. However, you can have 32 graphics characters to a line. You can place the graphic symbol of your choice at the required location with a Call VChar statement which you use as follows:

```
CALL VCHAR (12, 17, 42)
```

The first number in the brackets is the row number, followed by the line number and then the character number. Call VChar is a very useful equivalent of other Basics' Print At.

The manuals provided with the computer *Beginners' Basic* and *User's Reference Guide* are clear and detailed and fortunately do not suffer the normal U.S. approach which you find in many manuals, such as the one provided in the States with the Vic.

Even if you have never touched a computer before the TI 99/4, you will find *Beginners' Basic* easy to understand. So long as you study the manual carefully you will quickly learn the rudiments of programming.

Some worthwhile demonstration programs are given in the book, and once you have read through them you are unlikely to have any real problems writing your own.

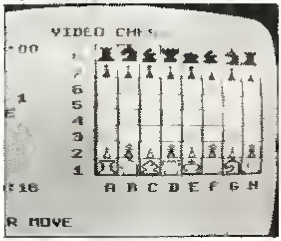
All the peripherals plug into the right hand side of the computer, piggy backing if necessary. I could not make the printer function at all, despite trying different leads and different drive programs.

The plug in command modules are of mixed quality. Video Graphics were unimaginative random coloured lines with a kind of music. The so-called Life program was incomprehensible and bore no resemblance to John Conway's famous program of the same name.

Speech Editor was fun. The voice box or solid-state speech synthesiser plugs into the right hand side, and speaks with a modulated, American accent. It has more than 300 built in words such as negative and hello which it says clearly and confidently, in a rather splendid way.

Other words such as those beginning with B or P are not so distinct. You can use parts of words in the vocabulary to build your own words and here we found one curious glitch, although the computer can cope with "Goodbye" the words "Good" and "Bye" separated by a space became utter gibberish.

Video Chess is superb — almost good enough to make it the sole reason you buy the machine. It plays a good, fast game, even on the highest



levels of play. The graphics are very clear, possibly the least ambiguous chess graphics I have seen on any computer.

There is also a Replay feature which, at any time in the game, allows you to re-run the whole game quickly from the beginning, complete with bleeps and blurps from the sound box. If you do not buy any other software with your TI 99/4, make sure you obtain the chess.

The first menu with some multi games packs is in three languages. You select your language, such as German, and from then on, all printed words on the screen are in German.

The review machine was provided with a generous range of programs. The most useful was the extended Basic which gives you access to many facilities, such as multi statement lines, which are taken for granted on other computers. Extended Basic also includes the splendidly-named Sprite command.

A sprite is a little coloured blob which you use to create moving graphics. Extended Basic also allows you to load and run one program from another. In all, there are more than 40 new or expanded commands. This module is vital for serious use of the TI 99/4.

The software modules are well packed and each is supplied with an instruction booklet and a keyboard overlay which has symbols such as arrows for cursor control, as well as game-specific words, such as the Replay feature.

Other software tested included Children's Education which includes addition and subtraction using colour and sound, and featuring vertical problems, that is, the numbers are on top of one another, like sums written on paper.

Early Reading is quite fun, using graphics with written and spoken words. Pre school Early Learning Fun, aimed at children from three to six, includes counting and sorting activities, an alphabet drill and an exercise in which shapes are matched. This pack is likely to prove a painless way to ensure your children become computer literate.

Beginning Grammar in Dutch and English is for primary school children, and intends to teach the parts of speech. this pack is a little tiresome. Connect Four plays a good, very fast game — far faster than the Atari cartridge of the same name. It makes good use of sound, although after a few games you will probably wish to turn it down or off before it drives you mad. Connect Four and Video Chess were definitely my favourites among the games. There was no Space Invader type game supplied.

Household Money Management leads to projections of future spending, drawing pretty and depressing graphs of your finances, and can dump details on to cassette for future recall. Terminal Emulator "links your home computer to the telecommunications world through special data accessing programs. Lets you select options such as load rate which make your computer compatible with other systems". This pack buffers up to 256 characters of incoming data, transmits control characters which signal the remote computer to perform pre defined functions, and needs an interface and Modem to work.

CONCLUSIONS

- The computer is of little value without extended Basic. It is however, in my opinion, much better than any of the video games machines, because at least you are buying a real computer which you can use as such when you have tired of playing the games.
- The reading and counting programs for the young are an ideal way of painlessly introducing children to computers if you do not mind taking the risk that they will start speaking with an American accent, like many Speak And Spell devotees.
- The better games, such as Video Chess and Connect Four, are superb — as good as or better than competing products.
- The graphics are very flexible with the Call VChar and Call Colour commands giving — even in the standard on board Basic — a system which you will quickly master. There are 16 colours available.
- The sound is clear and reasonably musical. There is a noise option, plus of course, speech if you buy the synthesiser.
- The only real objection I have to the computer, and it is a major enough objection to discourage purchasers, is the speed of the machine. It is appallingly slow in many fields, and this lack of speed is not really acceptable nowadays.
- If you want a good, noisy colour computer, have a look at a Tandy, a Vic and the TI 99/4 before you decide. Each has worthwhile features, each has different software support, and each has foibles which may discourage purchase.
- I do not believe the TI 99/4 will make a major impact on the British computer scene and therefore you may find fellow users a little thin on the ground. It would have been a completely different story if Texas Instruments had put the TI 99/4 on the market two years ago at the present price. ■

SURVEY

ATOM CASSETTES

Eric Deeson casts a critical eye at the standard of packages in the burgeoning Atom software market

IN MY REVIEW of ZX-81 software in the October issue I noted the significance of the low price of cassettes published by Sinclair Research. At £3 95, Sinclair cassettes hold down the prices of ZX software from other manufacturers That is good for the buyer, naturally, and also helps exclude the cowboys

Atom material is far more costly, cassette for cassette — and there tend to be fewer programs on one tape Of course the expanded machine is twice the price of the ZX-81 16K, so perhaps it is fair that software is more expensive — publishers have higher capital costs to claw back and a much smaller pool of purchasers

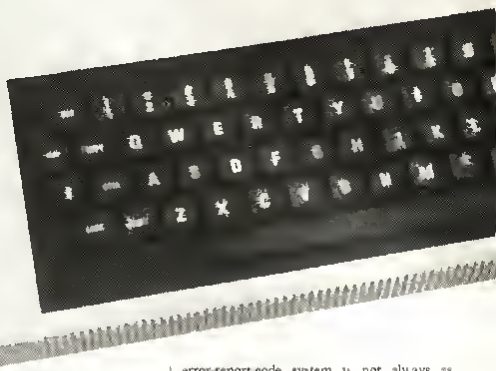
Indeed, judging by the packages I reviewed the Atom software market is very different to the ZX one The large majority of the review programs are games, some of them excellent models of the arcade aces — there are three versions of Space Invaders, for instance There is little for business and education It seems clear that the home leisure market is the aim That is somewhat surprising as so many parents want educational programs, and so many businesses operate from the home

I found that loading was not perfect on the Atom — neither with a Waltham W 167 which rarely fails for my ZX 80 or ZX-81, nor with the Sharp RD 620E widely recommended for those machines and the Atom The routine was the only one I could load and save, but as *The magic book* points out, that is not a precise test Loading the published tapes was not 100 percent — indeed, it was five percent in the first few hours

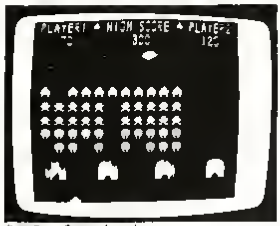
As with the ZX-81, the recorder volume setting is critical — and of course, the level varies from publisher to publisher and even from program to program by the same publisher It is useful to put coloured dots on the recorder volume control to help with loading levels. Software suppliers should give program loading times — it is helpful to have a watch to stare at as well as a static screen ZX 81 and the expensive micros give visual indication of loading progress — so, too should the Atom as loading can be so capricious

Atom Basic is unconventional — I do not think I shall ever understand why floating point work is so complex The incorporation of assembler, and Do-Until are exceptionally useful, as are the graphic modes — though it is much easier to use graphics blocks on the Sinclair

Let us make a few general observations about the Atom for those contemplating



graduating to this powerful little machine First, the manual is poor — it is much more comprehensive than the ZX-81's, but far harder for a novice to follow Even in its second edition, it still contains errors and shows many signs of haste The assembler section is



Bug Byte Space Invaders

very good, but I found even the reference chapters hard to use and poorly compiled

I miss the Sinclair's single key entering of keywords which then appear in full on display — Atom's P for Print is no substitute Also the manual's so called "powerful Edit" does not seem to work on program listings and so as far as I am concerned, does not exist

There is no syntax checking either, and Go addresses must match line numbers — though the line-label system is marvellous So, programming errors are easy to miss and the error-report code system is not always as helpful as it could be

It is good that with the Atom you do not need to specify the control variable in Next, but a pity that End is needed I like the file handling procedures but not the complex Break Sound is good, but why not feed the speaker during Loading to help if things are going wrong? The Repeat key is useful — one misses it on the Sinclair keyboards, but it should remember the last character typed to save broken fingers.

Our review takes in five suppliers and we shall deal with them one by one. First is Acornsoft of 4a Market Hill, Cambridge CB2 3NJ Sitting on Acorn's lap as this group is, so to speak, one would expect from it top quality, top reliability, and top utility in its programs Acornsoft software is not, in my opinion, far and away the best — though it is very good

The company brochure lists 17 cassettes, all but one at £11 80 each including VAT — the most expensive on the market However, each cassette tends to have several programs, so beware when making price comparisons Eight of the packages are games, three give mathematics utilities and three more provide computing utilities That leaves Database Business and Forth

All seven of the programs we reviewed start with a star-load and automatically Run "INDEX" which also displays the character set and is useful for pre setting the volume level The main programs are loaded normally

— even if with difficulty — and are relatively heavy on memory. It is interesting that the listings are not closed — has Acornsoft not read *The Atom magic book?*

Acornsoft cassettes are supplied in neat polystyrene foam boxes which are durable but not much help if you keep program cassettes in a cassette case. The covers give brief but usually adequate documentation. By absolute standards, it is too brief, but it is more than anyone else provides.

Games 5 gives us Invaders, Wumpus and Reverst which are all standard micro games, though the second is really a form of Adventure rather than a true Wumpus. Invaders which occupies 5K and 6K graphics including instructions, is a slow version of the standard one player game using low level graphics and sound. The score and record score appear at the end of a battle rather than simultaneously.

Wumpus — 5K and 6K graphics with no included instructions — is, as I mentioned, more like the old Adventure — any one of 20 30-cave labyrinths in memory, or a random one, four bat caves, four pits, three arrows. There are no graphics in this, but it is a game to tempt the hours away before you decide to program your own version.

I do not like the graphics approach to Acorn's Reverst — 3K and 5K with no instructions — but the options are flexible. The computer plays itself or you, or you can play a friend using its board. In the one player version legal moves are shown, which detracts somewhat, and the computer's game is not very strong although it is fast.

Games 6 has variety, too, and features Dodgems, a superb arcade-style racing game which is new to me. Your car races through a kind of maze, making points and avoiding the computer's car which is programmed to crash into you. It has very good low resolution graphics and sound and uses 4K and 6K.

Simon — 2K and 6K — is the only program whose documentation mentions colour output, though it is readily played in monochrome. The sequences are of blocks of yellow, red, striped and blue, with tones. It is difficult to win — even at the lowest skill level. Instructions are included and it is worth learning them before playing.

Amoeba — 3K and 3K — is a delightful game based on the pattern shown on page 82 of the manual. Although the documentation instructions are hard to follow and contain a minor error, the game is impressive once you discover the winning technique. The game is for one player against the computer or two to four players against each other.

Maths 1 is, of course, a serious package. It is a pity that I found the review copy unloadable. Plot met the same fate — the listing was incomplete and I could find no trace of the other two programs. Plot — 5K and 6K — has 11 options, plotting input functions, points, lines and curves with or without graded axes. Simultaneous — 2K and 5K — solves linear unspecified sets of simultaneous equations with real coefficients. Regression — 2K and 5K — tells you the best straight line through a set of data points. Plot, incidentally, includes the option of actually showing such a line.

Struggling through Timedata's maze

I found the Utilities 1 cassette hard to load, too, but this time not impossible. The disassembler star loads into graphics memory, occupying 2K. Thus, the lower text space is free for machine code. Its range of options is useful.

Fast COS is particularly interesting. This 1K assembler routine allows one to Save and Load at 1,200 baud, with a visual indication on screen that the operations are in progress. Will one need special data cassettes, I wonder?

Renumber loads into 1K of graphics memory. It is less versatile than the version in the manual, re-numbering only as 10,10, but is, of course, better placed in memory. Also it displays labelled line numbers and unused labels, which is useful.

It is most important for a user of any micro to learn how to hold and process records. Acornsoft's Database, 5K, allows the use of 14 commands, which are briefly, but just about adequately, explained in a 16-page leaflet. The data is held in graphics memory — 6K will handle 100 records.

The leaflet explains the system, which is complex, using a sample database on cassette — a wine list. You need the wine by the time you have understood the commands.

As a computing teacher I was interested to have a book at the Peeko-Computer — 5K and 1K — which is a delightful simulation of the 6502 microprocessor. At all times the 50-byte memory contents are displayed. Each may hold a single decimal digit. Machine level coding is achieved by the use of 10 decimal instructions: BRK, LDA, STA, CLC, ADC, DEC, INC, LDA, @ INE and JMP.

There is a 16-page booklet for this material, too — necessary as the model is a good one and needs some sample assembly programs to help you start. The claim is that once you have mastered Peeko, you are close to being able to program the Atom in machine code.

Atom Business turns out to be the same as the Phipps business cassette which we shall discuss later. This time, however, the review cassette was supplied with excellent 110-page *Atom Business* book which clarifies everything.

Bug Byte of 98-100 The Albany, Old Hall Street, Liverpool 3, is a vigorous and very reputable supplier of software for the Atom and in particular, Sinclair micros. It also sells chips and tapes.

Its Atom cassettes are neatly packaged, but there is no documentation other than the pretty descriptions in the brochure. Instead, instructions are the first item on most of the cassettes.

Bug Byte prices vary greatly, from £3 to £8 including VAT — but most of the cassettes contain only one program, albeit, usually, a good long one.

Disassembler occupies 4K and is the company's only non-game program at the moment. It works and has the usual features. However, I do not think that it is as good as the Acornsoft model, though it costs only £4.

Breakout, again 4K, insisted on giving me a distorted display — perhaps on purpose to make the game harder? The nine difficulty levels do not seem to vary enormously, but at

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

any level, the game is an attractive and reasonably sophisticated version of the standard price, £4

Fruit Machine — 8K, graphics 2K — is, says Bug Byte, "just as entertaining as a real fruit machine, but far cheaper in the long run" Maybe Acornsoft agrees — this, with Bug Byte's Invaders, has the hallmark "Acornsoft Approved" At £4, it is certainly a brilliant, incredibly fast model with lovely sound and graphics

Golf, at 5K and £5 with floating point arithmetic, could have done with higher level graphics Even so, its random holes are attractive — and tough You give your handicap, select a club and a shot to try to play on to the green and into the hole All the hazards are there, I believe — though I tended to lose the ball embarrassingly often

Invaders — 12K, 4K graphics, £6 — is the best excuse to expand your Atom It is a superb version of the standard game, tough and fast with continuous score display Players alternate turns in the two-player mode It is brilliant, Acornsoft approved and more costly than the Cambridge company's version but it does have such good resolution

After than, Lander — 12K and £5 — is a disappointment It is a relatively sophisticated version of the original game — you have three ships to land on small patches of flat ground among mountain peaks You control the rate of descent or ascent even off screen, against a falling fuel supply whose level is continuously displayed, and you adjust your position to the left or right by delicate control There are five modes of difficulty and the instructions are part of the program

Pinball — 6K, graphics 2K £4 50 — is almost as inspired a model of the real thing as Fruit Machine Modelling one of those old mechanical arcade games, it requires little in put skill and you cannot Tilt The sound is good, the graphics average

Finally, from this stable there is Star Trek — 12K and £5 — whose Captain Kirk battles the Klingons in an eight by-eight galaxy The separate instructions on the tape are complex, and need to be — there is data to star load, too

I cannot give full justice to the Phipps Associates of 3 Downs Avenue, Epsom, Surrey, Atom Business tape Costing £7 50, it goes with a £6 95 book to which I did not have access at the time I have seen several Phipps books in the past, and have been impressed This particular one gives all the necessary documentation for the 11 short programs supplied As it is, though I ran them, I often could not understand them — even by dry running the listings

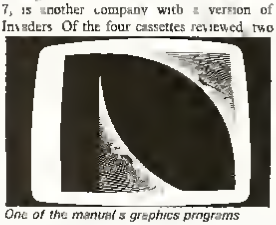
Add up gives the running total of input sums of, say, money Inputs are very poorly mug-trapped, however, so stick to your calculator Label sends data for labels of up to five lines to the printer You can have up to 100 of each WTMS is a metric/imperial measure converter, using non standard symbols DCF asks for inputs about house leasing and prints out something called PCH NPV and RENT NPV for different rates

The Sales program has good messages and traps It allows data handling from files for 52 weeks Graph plots data from tape Nom forms accounts from data on tape Budge should have been called Bug — it crashes on my copies and is to do with arrays Do businessmen need to know about arrays?

EXS gives VAT data for input sums of money You can not change VAT rate without going through the List, though STD is not a telephone bill calculator it gives the mean and standard deviation of input data, plus or minus — but not 0, which is the End code

QUE is the only one of these programs to use graphics It does so delightfully, showing queue movement at up to five counters I was particularly sorry not to have documentation here — this looks to be a powerful program as well as an enjoyable one

Program Power of 9 Wensley Road Leeds 7, is another company with a version of Invaders Of the four cassettes reviewed two



One of the manual's graphics programs

are sophisticated games without documentation, one is a music maker, needs VIA and has no documentation, and the fourth is an ambitious, high level graphics statistics program That has reasonably good documentation, even if the second page closes with "Perhaps the best instruction for a program of this complexity is to use it and see what happens"

I was unable to load any of these programs into the Atom, despite two hours' struggle They are all machine code, which sounds good, but that may be part of the problem Two of the cassettes by the way, also carry instructions programs They are recorded after the main material, which makes them even less helpful

Astrobirds and Invader Force — both 5K and 6K graphics, £6 95 — are lengthy arcade type games with sound effects and continuous score display Astrobirds becomes more difficult as you progress, Invader Force has six difficulty levels Histats — 5K and 6K floating point arithmetic, £7 95 — sounds very good value for users in a number of contexts It loads data to and from tape and has 11 other options These include a wide range of statistical calculations and graphical outputs

Finally, Music Box — 5K and VIA, £8 95 — is another exciting sounding piece of software You can use the keyboard as a piano, or input notes with durations one by one into memory for editing and saving A seven octave range and tempo change are offered.

Timedata, 57, Swallowdale Basildon, Essex, publishes the deservedly popular *Magic books*, including the *Atom magic book*, £5 95 source of a number of the programs on the three review cassettes The cassettes cost £5 each and contain four short but pleasant games Instructions are in the programs, very brief notes are on a slip of paper in each cassette case

Hammurabi *et al* is a cassette of 3K and 1K programs Hammurabi itself is the standard text only version — difficult to enjoy, not least because the user has to perform, mentally, tough and unnecessary calculations Othello is a beautifully designed and executed version of the standard game The computer plays better than in Acornsoft's Reversi but is not as fast the screen display here is excellent

Scramble is a rather poorly-displayed screen version of the old game where one shuffles the letters round the plastic square There are 10 well graded levels of difficulty, and the computer counts your moves Hexpawn must be a make weight The traditional game is simple anyway — here the computer could not even play the only winning move The Cupball and Pinball cassettes contain four 5K and 1K programs each

Cupball is a clever version of find the pea, but would not be exciting for long The Breakout on this tape is, however, very good — fast moving and sophisticated giving a long skill testing game with great sound effects Then there is a pleasant Simon game called Simon2, to add to the confusion about the order and names of programs on the tape 3D Maze is very clever The maze itself is two-dimensional — up to 15 by 14 — but as you go through it, you see what lies ahead in three dimensions

Pinball the first program on the last cassette, is an Atom version of the American form of the game It gives continuous score display and lets you wiggle the flippers to try to keep the ball in play Spacewar is far more addictive It is a kind of *kamikaze* Invaders with super, low level graphics and sound Even the easiest of the 10 play levels is tough — this is a great game for the adrenal gland The "end of the Universe as we know it" is most impressive

Crash is a drive along the road hitting these blocks but missing those kind of game Only one level — and it is not an easy one, though the low level graphics restrict excitement Finally, there is Letters — I have seen the same game called Tank You must drive inside a square at a speed of 1 10, hitting the displayed letters in order Failure is hitting the wrong letter or the sides of the square This is surprisingly addictive

CONCLUSIONS

- My biggest problem was loading
- Clearly, the software can be quite excellent and with Christmas approaching you have a rich choice at your disposal In these circumstances, it is a good thing that the vast majority of the available software is for gaming — but I find that a disappointing comment on home computing
- With only a limited number of suppliers from which to choose it is quite feasible to track developments in the whole field Acornsoft Bug Byte and Timedata all supply excellent material ■

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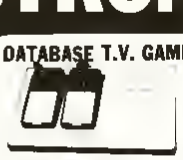

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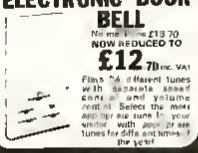

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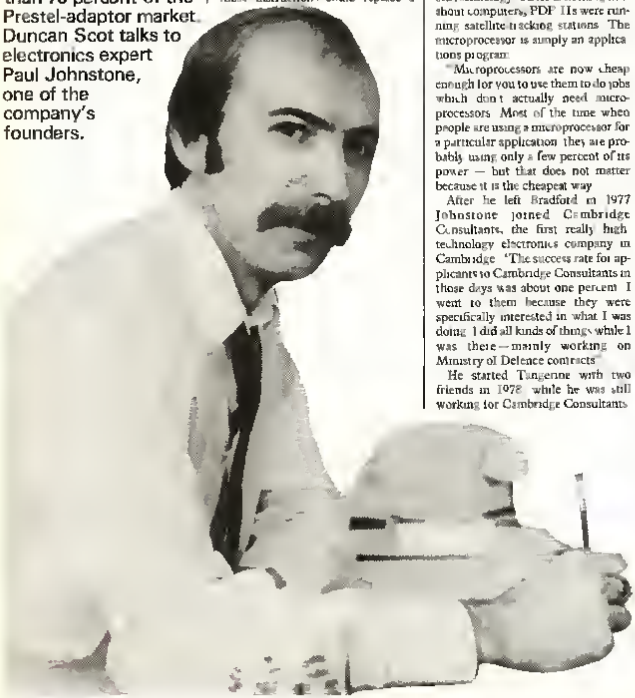
INTERVIEW

PAUL JOHNSTONE OF

A little to the north of the growing Cambridge grouping of high-technology companies, such as Sinclair Research and Acorn, another successful microcomputer firm has emerged. Ely-based Tangerine has gained a formidable reputation with its Microtan-65, and its £170 Tantel has already captured more than 70 percent of the Prestel-adaptor market. Duncan Scot talks to electronics expert Paul Johnstone, one of the company's founders.



THE MAN WITH the engineering and design skills behind Tangerine and with the original idea for the products and the company is Paul Johnstone. He went to school in Colchester and then moved to Bradford University where he took an honours degree in electronics and electrical engineering. He stayed on to do a PhD in high-speed analogue-to-digital converters.

"It was while I was there that microprocessors were really starting. The difficulty for an engineer in those days was that he would look at all the information he could find about a microprocessor and it was all software, software, software — instruction sets and things like that. One just could not grasp just how those instructions could replace a handful of gates and a few flip-flops.

"We were told that a microprocessor could reduce a 100-chip design to about 20 chips. One looked at a microprocessor and it was just a chip with 40 pins on it and it had an instruction set. How did one make that do a logic function? That was why the manufacturers were producing evaluation boards.

"Some universities offer microprocessor courses now. I certainly had to struggle through the hard way but I'm glad I did. I think it has left me with a much deeper understanding of what the device is trying to do.

"We were all frightened by the fact that it was new technology. It was not new, it was a new application of an old technology. There is nothing new about computers, PDP 11s were running satellite tracking stations. The microprocessor is simply an application program.

"Microprocessors are now cheap enough for you to use them to do jobs which don't actually need microprocessors. Most of the time when people are using a microprocessor for a particular application they are probably using only a few percent of its power — but that does not matter because it is the cheapest way.

After he left Bradford in 1977 Johnstone joined Cambridge Consultants, the first really high-technology electronics company in Cambridge. "The success rate for applicants to Cambridge Consultants in those days was about one percent. I went to them because they were specifically interested in what I was doing. I did all kinds of things while I was there — mainly working on Ministry of Defence contracts."

He started Tangerine with two friends in 1978 while he was still working for Cambridge Consultants. "They were quite amenable to it. I had started another company while I was at Bradford but that never really traded.

"I have always been interested in running my own business. I started the company with my two friends and brought out a VDU kit. It was a good product but it was a little expensive and a little too late.

"While that was happening, I designed the Microtan and worked on a few other projects. I realised that we needed a real company as opposed to a part time one. We needed professional management, we needed a good deal of money. I was really looking around for someone to create a more professional basis.

'The BBC should have chosen the ZX-81'

He then met Barry Muncaster, who was also working at Cambridge Consultants and who became a partner in a reformed Tangerine. "My two partners went their own way and Barry and I found some financial backing from a large private company. They did not want to take over the old Tangerine but they wanted the name. So we re-started the company, on October 1, 1979, and we bought the name Tangerine."

Under this arrangement Johnstone and Muncaster did not hold a majority shareholding in the company. A year later, in October 1980, they organised a management buy out with the ICFC to regain control. The ICFC specialises in management buy-outs and is owned jointly by the five main clearing banks and the Bank of England.

"The company is now run by Barry and myself. We have the majority shareholding, we have equal shares and are the only two directors. We are very fortunate. The reason why the partnership works so well is that we each fall naturally into the two distinct areas needed in the company. Barry is the businessman and I am the technical man.

"It was obvious that there was a hobbyist market for the Microtan and it was obvious that people in univer-

TANGERINE

sities and engineering establishments wanted to buy that kind of machine. We did not, however anticipate the level of business we would do. Everyone hears about how long they have to wait for their products. I would say that we are not as bad as everyone else in supplying the goods but we are certainly not crystal clean.

We have only just started to promote the Microtan. We have been chasing demand as hard as we can to try and keep level with it. In our first year we turned over more than double we thought we would.

Microtan users become very enthusiastic about the system. Certainly, the engineers to whom we sell the machine in universities and companies like it very much because it has been designed by an engineer not by a programmer. It shows from the reaction we obtain from the OEMs and the engineers—they like the way it has been put together.

We always planned a Modem and a colour VDU card for the Microtan. What happened with Tantel—the Prestel adaptor—is that someone we knew, who was involved with Prestel, suggested that we should build an adaptor rather than make the add-ons for the Microtan. I worked on some designs and reckoned we could build a low cost adaptor.

From the day we decided to manufacture Tantel, it took just seven weeks to produce a circuit diagram and a circuit board layout to finalise mechanical engineering aspects, to write the software and to win Post Office approval. We had already converted the product and knew roughly the approach we were to take.

Looking towards the future of Tangerine we are designing a new computer called the Tiger. This may or may not be a Tangerine product. We might be splitting the company up into viewdata products and computer products. The Tiger would probably go under the viewdata products side — that is where its future lies. It is a very powerful computer — it is not going to be cheap.

Sinclair Research is doing a tremendous job with the ZX 81. It has been nothing but good news for us. If it keeps the Japanese at bay it is doing us all a service. Sinclair is certainly doing the marketing for us. The ZX 81 is awakening public interest in microcomputers. Some people do not want to buy a ZX 81 and they want to spend more than £70. Acorn benefits from it, we benefit from it and I am sure Nascom

benefits from it — it's good news all round.

Barry Muncaster and I are on the side of Sinclair in respect of the BBC project. The BBC should have chosen the ZX 81. The series is a good idea, but the approach is wrong. The BBC should have planned a first series on the ZX 81 and if it was a success and people wanted to move into larger systems it should then have planned another series.

The BBC approached us and described the kind of computer the series required. The organisers of the programme were not convinced we could do it on time which was fair enough. We said to them that there was no way that we were going to make 12,000 computers to sit on the shelves for January based on their predictions of the market.

Besides we knew that companies such as Commodore would push very hard for the BBC microcomputer business. I would rather not compete with companies like Commodore, especially as the BBC has quite openly handed out the specifications of the BBC microcomputer to anyone who might want them. We could make one now. We know precisely how Acorn is doing it.

I think it is a disaster that the BBC is going for its own Basic. There is already a standard in Microsoft. Why try and create another? Microsoft has too strong a foothold now. I think it is going to frustrate people in the future.

We are also very disappointed in the way the Post Office has promoted Prestel. It spends an absolute fortune on telling people how wonderful Prestel is and how wonderful the Post Office is for having invented it, but the campaign does not actually say you need it, go out and buy it. About £6million was spent on one promotional campaign not so long ago.

What the Post Office must do is increase public awareness of Prestel. Before we entered the scene the entire industry had spent £48million and produced 7,000 registrations. Goodness knows what they spent it on. Little old Tangerine has sold 5,000 adaptors since then. We are doing more for Prestel than anyone else.

'The Tiger is a very powerful computer'

What the Post Office will not do is help the companies, apart from the set makers, who are actually doing the work. What we suggested and it was laughed out of court, was that if the Post Office is to spend £6million on trying to increase public awareness do not spend it all on television advertisements. The Post Office should have put an order on us for 10,000 units. We would have supplied them for a good price. What it then should have done is spend £5million on television advertising, saying that there are 10,000 adaptors to be given away free in a competition.

You would go along to your local Post Office and ask for an application form with a series of questions on it. The first 10,000 correctly completed forms would win a free adaptor. To win the adaptor you would have to go and find out about Prestel because the questions would be organised like that. That way you promote public awareness.

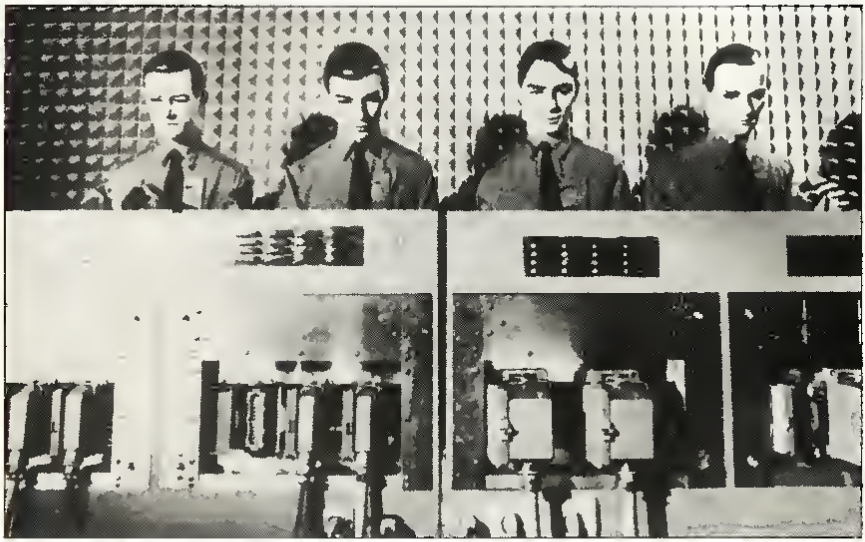
Obviously more than 10,000 people would have applied for it, and found out all about Prestel. The registrations would have gone up 10,000 units. The Post Office would have earned the extra revenue on it — there would have been no problems on its part. We would have distributed the application forms, we would have distributed the product. We would have had to take on extra staff and they would pay income tax and we would pay corporation tax.

The Government still has to learn how to deal with micros. The Department of Education should not be spending their £5million on stupid research grants. It ought to go buy £9million's worth of products and give them away. Just think of the mental power of the people who would be involved in using those products if they were to have them in schools.

You can spend £9million in no time at all on expensive executives talking about fancy schemes. If you buy £9million's worth of products and ship it into schools, the science and mathematics teachers will be working night and day on it and that's where the value is. It would also be £9million's worth of business for the U.K. computer companies.

There are science teachers in school who want to do more than buy an Apple or a Pet and program it. There are science teachers who want pupils to understand what a microprocessor is and how you can use it to solve problems. The future of the manufacturing industry of this country lies not in sitting down and writing programs for a Pet in Basic. The future lies in people understanding microcomputers and microprocessors and designing them into commercial products. ■

A LITTLE MICRO MUSIC



Whatever machine you own, Bill Bennett explains how you can coax it into producing melodious sound. He examines noteworthy machines at the top and bottom of the music-making scale, and offers some practical programming advice on how to compose musical routines

THE NEW GENERATION of home computers, designed more for the consumer than the serious user, offers a wide range of entertaining possibilities. Most people will have played or seen a computer game of one type or another either in the local pub upsetting the locals every time an alien finds its victim or at home. Expensive arcade games offer a limited sound facility and so do most home computers these days.

As far as home computing is concerned, music generation has always been a neglected field. That is a shame because consumer orientated microcomputers and music are made for each other. There are two major ways and a whole host of minor ones in which microcomputers and music may be married.

The most obvious and the original way of combining them is to use a computer to control a synthesiser. Early synthesisers worked by analogue signals—as opposed to the digital signals that computers use. These analogue signals mirrored the sound-wave form in an electronic pattern.

Instead of a keyboard, a computer and a digital-to-analogue converter can provide the input. Though originally this arrangement was unsophisticated—using the computer as no more than a sequencer—later developments along these lines produced some very interesting results.

Although the microcomputer is an ideal tool in a control system — and the results obtained by complex sequences were often very good — to be able to make the most of such a set up a good synthesiser was required. Synthesisers were in those days extremely expensive. What is more, the arrangement failed to take advantage of one of the most obvious features of microcomputers. Like synthesisers, micros have electronic signals which can be output via a loudspeaker to create sound.

To prove to yourself just how easy it is to create sound on a micro, find a program cassette. Try playing the program cassette through a stereo system—be warned, though, keep the volume low as the sound is awful. The sound you hear is not exactly *The Planets* but it is sound and that is a start.

The cacophony you just created would be enough to discourage most computer users, but fear not, most of the popular home micros have the means to provide far more civilised forms of music. Some popular home machines have circuitry of varying degrees of sophistication which enable the user to create micro music.

At the simple end of the spectrum, there is the Acorn Atom which has a speaker connected to an output port and a simple resistive network. On the other hand, the Vic 20 has a special chip for music generation. Whatever machine you possess, there is some way of coaxing music out of it. Most machines and techniques are covered here.

At the top end of the market, there are some remarkable instruments available. The dream machine of any computer musician must surely be the Fairlight CMI. This instrument is capable of creating just about every sound

A drumbeat simulation program

```
10  REM metronome program
11  REM this program simulates a drumbeat
20  DIM L(2) , BN(2), P(-1)
30  C=49002
40  C
50 LNMO  LDY #81
60 LNM1  LDA C ; STA C
70  ADC 0040 ; ADC 0030
80  ASL A ; ASL A
90  ROL L+2 ; ROL L+1 ; ROL L
95  DEY
100 BNE NM1
105 RTS
109 J
110 INPUT " length of beat ""B," length of pause ",P
120 FOR I = 1 TO 1000
130 "BBL = 100000 * B
140 LINK MOV
150 FOR J = 1 TO 600
160 NEXT J
170 LINK MOV
180 FOR J = 1 TO 10000P
190 NEXT J
200 NEXT I
210 END
```

possible and has been used to stunning effect on some top records. Remember the smashing of plates in *Babushka* by Kate Bush? Each one was in tune with the rest of the music. On this instrument, a wave form can be created and then played back at any frequency, corresponding to any note on a normal piano keyboard.

Lower down the performance scale is a synthesiser which can be attached directly to the Apple. The Casheab music synthesiser is the device in question and it features 32 voices with 16 wave forms. There is 1K of 12-bit samples per wave form and 255 amplitudes. The synthesiser sells in the States for around the $1,000 mark.

Next on the list, descending from the lofty heights of the Fairlight is the Alf Apple music synthesiser which is available in two forms. One costs £114, and the other slightly less. Again, the synthesis is of relatively high sophistication — this time with nine voices per board, and some driving software which includes high-resolution graphics. The parameters of the program can be changed during the performance of a tune: editing is enabled by the use of the joysticks.

If these synthesisers are beyond your budget, it does not mean you cannot join in the fun. There are many ways to enable home computers to generate music. We shall cover methods for the more common machines. If your machine is not listed, a careful study of the techniques used for other machines will give you some ideas how to start.

One of the more exciting features of the new Commodore Vic 20 computer is its music making ability. The music generated by the Vic is output via the loudspeaker on the television. If the television has an earphone socket, music can be recorded directly on to tape and can be played back through a stereo system.

The Vic's music capability is provided by a special chip, the video interface chip which gives the Vic its name. The Vic has four separate voices which are individually controlled by Poking a value which corresponds to a frequency into the location of the respective voice.

The voices can be categorised as alto, tenor, soprano and noise. By combining the first three voices, three part harmonies can be created. The noise voice can provide white noise in a number of different ways, the most useful of which is as a cymbal for rhythmic effects.

The volume control can be used only to control the overall volume, not the volumes of the individual voices. Unfortunately, this is a limitation but only a minor source of irritation. When one voice is used, envelopes can be generated to control the volume. There are 15 different volumes which can be used. With a cleverly written program such effects as *vibrate* — both soft and hard — are easily achieved.

Words used in computer music

- **Envelope** The envelope of a sound affects its loudness at different points in time. For example, a piano has an envelope which starts with a quick attack followed by immediate decay.
- **Analogue** As in analogue signals — continuously variable signals. As opposed to digital signals which can be either high or low, analogue signals can sit anywhere between.
- **VCO** Voltage-controlled oscillator — a device which produces an oscillation at a frequency proportional to the input voltage.
- **Tempo** The speed at which music is played.
- **Voice** One voice is one possible sound which can be output from an instrument at any moment. Usually the number of voices in an electronic instrument corresponds directly to the number of oscillators used.
- **Vibrato** An effect where the volume of a note is varied at a slow rate to produce a warbling sound.

If you appreciate the more avant garde forms of music, an unusual experiment is to link the random number generator to the sound generator to produce some interesting music. These computer users who are little more old fashioned in their tastes will find that the Vic is good at playing baroque music. The Vic's music facility is the feature of this computer which makes it worth buying.

The Acorn Atom is one of the more popular and established home computers. Like so many of the genre, it has the basic ingredients for creating sound and hence music. If the VIA — versatile interface adaptor — is added to the Atom, an eight-bit output can be converted by digital-to-analogue techniques into a signal to control a VCO or a voltage controlled oscillator. The Atom has two such output registers which place 16 bits at your disposal. The possible combinations, with various oscillators and envelope generators are numerous.

The Acorn Atom also has a built-in loudspeaker which is located on an output port at location B002 hexadecimal. The speaker has only one-bit resolution — that is it has only two possible states, on or off. This is limiting as it provides no flexibility of volume but a limited amount of music-making is possible with it. The main disadvantage, is that the speaker is located within the main body of the computer and it is quiet.

In the Acorn Atom manual there is sufficient information to help the user start making music. The main technique involves exclusive Oring the address with a number which has a one bit in the same position as the speaker.

The glorious thing about this computer and the speaker is that programs of increasing complexity are relatively easy to create. The best method is to establish a series of building blocks or subroutines to provide certain noises. *Arpeggios*, for example, are all easily added by software and before you know where you are, that tiny speaker is playing reasonable tunes.

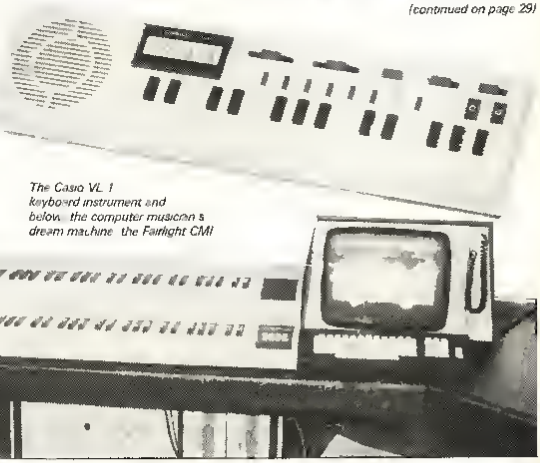
Another feature of the Atom is the high-resolution graphics — ideal for creating a visual display to go with your symphonies. One possibility is to display the music currently being played on the screen; another is to provide a crude sound and light show. The effect can be sensational on an Atom with colour video.

The proposed BBC computer will be from the same stable as the excellent Atom and its specification is enough to delight most. Undoubtedly, the computer musician will profit enormously from such a machine. The analogue-to-digital interface is one of the useful features, the built-in loudspeaker and sound generator another.

Together, these two open many possibilities, but no more than, say, the Vic. The voice synthesis facilities may be of use, slight tinkering with the circuit and judicious filtering of the output may lead to some interesting results.

Perhaps the feature which will be of real importance to the musician is the possibility of adding a 16-bit processor. 16 bits offer many more

(continued on page 29)



The Casio VL 1 keyboard instrument and below the computer musician's dream machine, the Fairlight CMI

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(continued from page 27)

combinations than eight bits, in fact 64,000 as opposed to 256.

A machine which offers the computer musician both software and hardware for computer music is the Sharp MZ 80K — albeit only in a primitive form. The Sharp has a single loudspeaker located within the main body of the machine, and there is also a volume-control potentiometer inside the chassis.

Music played on the Sharp always sounds slightly baroque, and often funny. The software for creating such music is disarmingly simple, but do not let it fool you — some very complex musical pieces can be played on the MZ 80K.

The speed at which the music plays is governed by the command Tempo. It takes the form Tempo X where X is an integer between one and seven. If X is omitted, the Tempo command will default to 4, which is the medium speed. Tempo 1 is the slowest and may be described as *lento*, seven is the fastest and can be described as *molto allegro* or *presto*.

Music itself is programmed as a string which contains a tune comprising letters, numbers and graphic symbols. A note is indicated by its corresponding letter. For example, the note C is entered in the music string as C. To rise or drop an octave a graphic symbol is used: the computer uses three octaves. To play a sharp, the hash symbol—which resembles the sharp symbol anyway—is used.

The duration of individual notes is governed by numbers, as in the diagram, and a rest is designated by the letter R. When no duration is assigned, the Sharp will default to duration 5 — the quarter beat. To write a tune in this format is not hard but requires some thought. After a number is read into the string, all subsequent notes will be given the same duration until another number is encountered.

Because of the large amount of memory available on the MZ-80K and its music software, creations of considerable complexity can be written with comparative ease.

The Texas Instruments TI 99/4 home computer, like the Sharp MZ 80K, has both hardware and software for the creation of computer music. Like the Vic, the 99/4 can operate three musical voices and one noise at any one moment. The major difference between the two is the software handling routine integral to the 99/4's Basic.

The extra software is in the form of a sub-program, which can be called from a Basic program written by the user. The command takes the format:

CALL SOUND (d f1,v1,f2,f3,v3,f4,v4)

The first parameter, "d", specified in the call statement is the duration of the note. Next is "f", the frequency, and finally "v", the volume. The rest of the parameters are the other voices which may be used or omitted in any sub-program call.

The unit of the duration is 1ms. Thus if "d" has the value one, the tone will last for 1ms. The maximum possible duration is about 4.25 seconds. If a negative sound duration is given, the computer will interrupt the present tone with the new one. It can do this because program execution continues while the sound is being played.

The frequency is specified directly in hertz between the limits of 100Hz and 44,733Hz—which is beyond your hearing but liable to set a dog yapping. If, for example, you wish to output the note middle C, the frequency parameter would take the value 262. A negative frequency between -1 and -8 will create a noise sound, a function useful for percussive effects.

An add-on device can be bought for the 99/4 which enables the musician to enter music from a keyboard directly to the computer — or in its other mode, by writing it in the traditional format on the screen. For the moment, this device is available only in the U.S.

```
10  CLEAR 4
20  A=1 : GOSUB a
21  GOSUB b
30  A=5 : GOSUBa
31  GOSUB b
40  A=24 : GOSUB a
41  GOSUB b
50  A=24 : GOSUB a
51  GOSUB b
100 REM  main program segment
790 END
800a  FOR I = A TO A+4
810   PLOT 12,5,(180-I*5)
820   PLOT 5,251,(180-I*5)
830   NEXT
840   RETURN
850b  Q=(180-A*5)
851   PLOT 12,5,(Q-18)
852   PLOT 5,7,(Q-27)
853   PLOT 5,9,(Q-18)
854   PLOT 5,9,(Q+4)
855   PLOT 5,11,(Q+2)
856   PLOT 5,12,(Q-3)
857   PLOT 5,6,(Q-7)
858   PLOT 5,5,(Q-10)
859   PLOT 5,4,(Q-14)
860   PLOT 5,7,(Q-17)
861   PLOT 5,13,(Q-14)
862   PLOT 5,12,(Q-9)
863   PLOT 5,8,(Q-11)
870   RETURN
900   END

1000 REM note drawing subroutine
1010 PLOT 12,R,(P*16)
1020 PLOT 5,R,P
1030 PLOT 5,(R-3),(P-1)
1040 PLOT 5,(R-4),(P-2)
1050 RETURN
```

This program contains all the necessary ingredients for creating a musical display on the Acorn Atom computer. Here are the bare bones. The program to generate the notes on the screen will have to be written by the computer user. To help, a subroutine has been added at line 1000 which will draw a note at a location defined by p and r.

The DAI personal computer is an ideal choice for the budding computer musician. Although the machine is not cheap at £595 plus VAT, it has some really very attractive features. If the Vic is called the Volkscomputer then the DAI is the Rolls Royce. The graphics of the DAI are featured on the front cover of this month's *Your Computer* and they are very smart indeed.

The music generation facilities are also what you would expect of this top micro. Four voices are on board, and they can be output either via the TV sound channel or the stereo DIN plug on the rear of the computer.

The commands to create music are Noise a b which deals with the noise generator where "a" is the envelope used which is defined by the Envelope command and "b" the volume. Unsurprisingly, Sound is the command which creates exactly what it suggests. There are parameters which specify which envelope is being used, the frequency, the channel through which the sound will be output, the volume and the tone of the sound. The Envelope command is a particularly good one — it allows the operator to specify exactly the shape of the sound envelope to be used on each channel.

There is another command, Talk, which generates weird and wonderful sound effects. A rumour was circulating that the function actually created speech, but DAI says it gave the command that name for want of a better one.

The ZX 80—and the ZX 81—are the most popular computers in the U.K. Unfortunately, as far as creating computer music is concerned, the Sinclair micros are not very good. Nevertheless, the ZX computer musician should not despair — there are ways of coaxing that machine to sing.

The most obvious way to create music on a ZX computer is by outputting a signal via the jack socket—which is usually used for loading programs. The output music can be recorded on to tape and played back later or it can be output directly to a loudspeaker for amplification.

Two other techniques are also available: one is to play the sound through the TV loudspeaker—but this is rarely very successful; the other is to cause high frequency switching which can be received on a transistor radio placed near to the computer and tuned to a suitable waveband. In one application of the second technique, the pitch of the output note can be altered by tuning the radio.

The UK101 microcomputer from Compshop was one of the biggest-selling hobby computers before the latest wave of consumer machines. These two distinct types of home computers should not be confused. The hobby computer — i.e., the UK101—is usually bought by an electronics hobbyist who often will construct the machines himself. The consumer computers are generally bought by people who have little previous computing experience, who are not too interested about what is going on inside their machine, and who just want to concentrate on programming.

This, then, should explain why the UK101 does not have any facilities built in for the creation of computer music. A hobbyist is expected to develop this kind of feature off his own bat. That does not mean that there are no computer music facilities available for the machine; it is just that they must be bought as optional extras.

Crude computer music is possible on an unmodified UK101—or Superboard for that matter—by using the tape output port, but this is very limited because of the 300baud tape-transfer rate. In other words digits cannot be sent at a speed faster than 3.3ms, or the pitch of an output note must be lower than 300Hz.

The add-on music board for the UK101/Superboard is reasonably sophisticated, and can be bought from certain computer or electronic component suppliers.

So, by plugging in your computer and fiddling around, you too can be there with Kraftwerk, Tangerine Dream, Visage *et al*. If you do not have a computer, or you just like gimmicks, you could do worse than purchasing a Casio VL 1 — not really music on a micro, more like music on a calculator. The VL 1 seems to fall between the two stools of the excellent Casio range of pocket calculators and the highly praised range of keyboard instruments. ■

ART

CRAFTY DESIGNS ON

If you mention computer art to the average hobbyist, you will probably meet with blank incomprehension. Yet for a growing number of users, computers are a valid creative medium. Christopher Histed examines the fundamentals of this infant art form.

THE COMPUTER can readily be used as a creative tool. You can construct and view drawings on the screen or produce them as hard copy on paper. Music generation can be achieved by most hobbyists on their home computers with some machine code; most micros can easily be made to play tunes of varying complexities.

All this is needed to make music is a computer, and some form of output port to which an amplifier and loudspeaker can be attached. From there, the only constraints are musical talent — if you write your own tunes — or finding the energy for a trip to the local library to choose music to load into the computer.

There are three main types of output for creating drawings with the computer:

- Some type of display, either alphanumeric or in some graphics dot-type style, on the terminal or monitor. This form is of course a static and regenerstable form of picture-making which cannot really be captured as hard copy other than by photographic methods.
- Hard copy output from a normal alphanumeric printer or from a graphics printer which then can be used to print the picture in dots. This method of producing pictures is nearly permanent and allows the pictures to exist independently of the computer system. It can give rise to one-off pictures, which means only one output — the program that generated the picture is destroyed.
- A second form of hard copy can be obtained from graphics plotters that have a fixed piece of paper which some kind of pen or marking device is moved. This can be used only for line drawings, as it cannot properly fill in areas of colour, tone or produce dots.
- This kind of plotter cannot plot dots to create shading effects without considerable problems. However, the graphics plotter is a very useful piece of equipment and is one I have used extensively in the creation of assorted pictures and drawings.

Using the first method, your screen display need not be of the high-resolution quality of the Apple or the Atom, but may be of only, say, 16 lines by 32 characters. Even on this format, pictures are easily created — although of not such excellent resolution as 300 by 200 dots on a monitor.

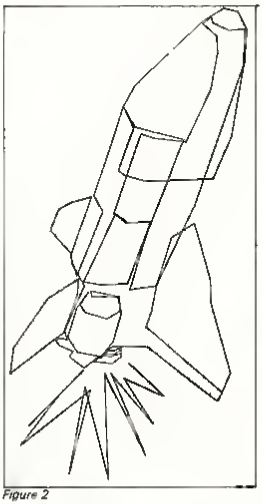


Figure 2

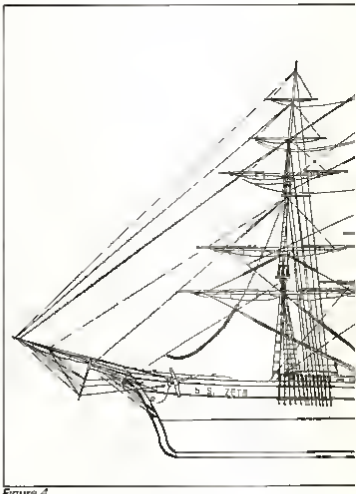
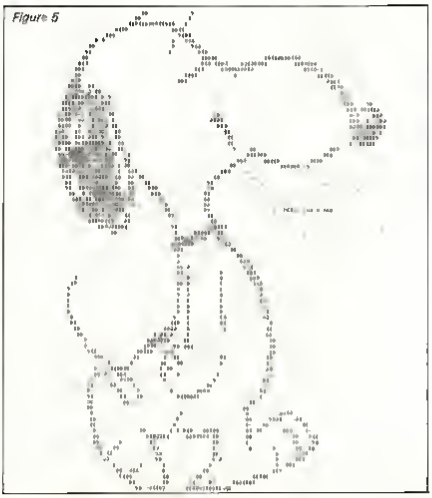


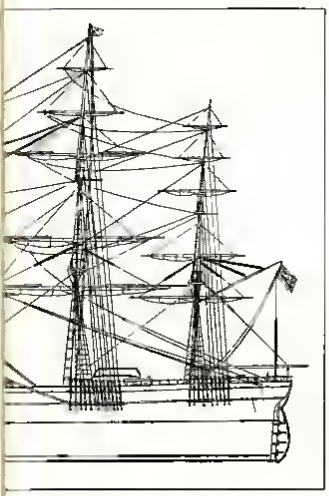
Figure 4

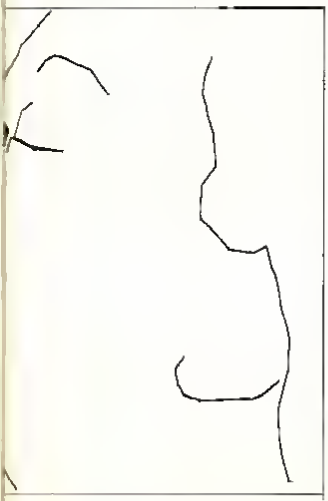
Figure 3.

Figure 5



A COMPUTER





For this type of computer you need a program which will clear the screen, and will, by some means, cover as much of the screen as you choose with characters of your choice. It should then be able to save the screen data on to some kind of file — either tape or disc.

That is easy if you configure a string variable to be the size of your screen, and then input characters to it. For example, on the Atom, with a screen format of 16 by 32, you would need to be able to store a string variable of length 512 bytes on to tape, and then to load one from tape and print it on the screen.

Even with this format of screen, you can make surprisingly good representations of objects — although you may have to stand several yards away to appreciate them fully.

Using a high resolution screen such as the Apple or Atom, the idea is similar but you require far more memory. You cannot really store the data as a string, and so must use a section of memory which can be transferred to and from disc or tape when you want to save or view a picture. With this kind of screen, you can obtain some very impressive pictures.

An example program for making this kind of picture for the Acorn Atom in clear 3 mode is:

```
10 clear 3
20 for x=0 to 128 movex 0, plot 6, 64, 97
30 move x, 192 plot 6, 64, 97 next
40 for x=0 to 192 move 0,x plot 6 64, 97
50 move 128 x, plot 6 64 97 next
60 end
ready
```

Graphics plotters and printers are by far the most useful pieces of equipment available to the computer artist. Once the picture has been generated on the screen in high resolution graphics, you can perform a screen dump of the screen memory on to a graphics printer which will transfer the picture on to paper.

Unfortunately, graphics printers cost £300 upwards. If you cannot afford one do not despair: wherever you live there must be at least one computer club in the vicinity. Once you have joined one you will meet other members with the same interests as yourself. You can pool your resources to buy a printer or perhaps someone at the club already has a printer or plotter.

If you cannot find a way to dump your screen on to paper, you can always photograph your monitor screen and then produce prints of it from the negative. Since the most popular amateur photographers' camera uses 35mm film, I will explain what you need to do to obtain good-sized prints from your screen. The film should be preferably 400 ASA black and white, such as Ilford HP5.

Assuming you are using the 35mm camera with its standard 50mm focal-length lens, you will be able to fill the view finder with the screen of a 12in monitor or TV from a distance of about 0.5m away. There will be no problems if you use another lens: you must select a distance to frame the screen.

You will need a tripod or some firm support to keep the camera steady. An exposure meter is handy, and if set to 400 ASA or the relevant film speed, there is no need for exposure compensation with the screen. Since the screen is normally refreshed every 25th of a second with a TV, you cannot use a shutter speed greater than 1/15th of a second.

Next you will need to darken the room so that the only light reaching the film is from the monitor screen. If you have a meter, take a reading of the correct exposure from the screen and take the photograph. If you have no meter, an exposure of 1/15th of a second at F3.5 will probably suffice.

Do not take just one photograph — take at least four and ideally six. Have a contact sheet made from the film. This is a large, 10in by

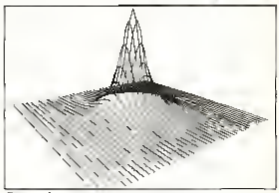


Figure 1

8in, sheet of paper on which the negatives have been printed actual size. From this you can select the frame which is best and have a large print made.

Figures 1 to 3 were all produced on a Hewlett Packard computer with 8K of memory and a graph plotter. All were produced under program control and the programs took me about an hour to write each. Figure 1 is a three-dimensional view of a hill, and the program could be made to plot the picture of it as seen from any position above or below the base plane.

The other two plotter pictures created using the Hewlett Packard were originally pencil line drawings which were converted to digital form with a digitiser, and then re-plotted on the graph plotter. The picture of the ship is from deep in my computer art files and is nevertheless an extremely fine example of the kind of picture which can be produced with a graph plotter and many hours of painstaking effort. Figure 5 will be immediately recognised as the immortal Snoopy, who has graced the walls of countless computer rooms. ■

Storm the castle: play the

BY BOB MERRY

The Duke of Petshire, with whom you are at war, has fled to his castle. The game invites you to use your skill and ingenuity in setting siege to the Duke's fortress.

I HAVE NOT used any graphics in the game and there are virtually no departures from standard Basic, so it should prove relatively easy to convert it to other systems. Because the game itself occupies a large part of the 8K memory I have in my old ROM Pet, I have split the game into two programs, but the first of these is simply an instruction program which can be omitted if necessary.

The printed version given here uses all upper case letters, double spaced, as the printer used could not cope with lower case embedded in a program and called by Poke 59468,12. However, the version I play with uses lower case, which makes the presentation so much easier to read.

The only piece of program extra to the text is the subroutine at the end of each page. This waits for you to finish reading the page before printing out the next one and while it waits, it runs through a few random numbers — a method of Randomising before the game itself starts.

The game itself is contained in the second program and is really concerned with the interaction of a number of variables. The main variables are listed in table 1 and it is the space taken by these which uses most of the 8K memory. Incidentally, although this program was written for an old ROM Pet, it does, in fact, work just as well on update ROMs without any modification. The main purpose of this article is, therefore, to highlight the areas which will need changing on other systems.

Line 110 contains another method to Randomise the inbuilt RND function and the early lines down to 270 set most of the non-

game of siege

zero variables. The program will return to line 280 to start a new turn, so a number of variables are reset at this point

The display of the current state of play and options involves the use of various cursor-control symbols, so for those not familar with the Pet, here is a translation the reversed heart symbol clears the screen, reversed Q means cursor down, reversed S is home, i e , the cursor goes to the top left of the screen, the reversed vertical lines in, for example, lines 1170 and 1790 are cursor left instructions

I spent some time making the various read-outs grammatical with correct forms of plurals and verbs so this needed some manipulation on the screen. The R symbol in line 1900 is the command for reverse screen

So much for the symbols — now I will explain how some of them are used to achieve the desired result on the screen. The first example of this is the initial display contained in lines 300 340 This routine lists the current numbers of each item you have at your disposal and most of these are listed by the loop in 320-330

However, we wish to display the number of carts which have not been assigned to a task alongside the total number of carts This is done by line 340 which first moves the cursor down and across the screen to the correct position before printing UC A similar idea is used in the subroutine 1790, which updates the figures for unassigned men, UN, and carts, UC, at various points in the program

It does this without disturbing the rest of the display by moving the cursor to the correct position, printing sufficient blank spaces to obliterate the previous number and then backing up the cursor ready to print the new values of UN and UC

Where cursor left symbols are used on their own on other lines, it is usually to overcome the fact that a numerical variable is printed with a leading blank for a positive value and this can lead to a slightly untidy layout on the display In other words, they are there for aesthetic reasons and are not really necessary for the working of the program

One area that will need to be changed for other systems is the subroutine in line 1800. This is used after each response to clear the area at the bottom of the screen by Poking blank spaces into this area, thus leaving the main display untouched The cursor is then moved down the screen ready for the next option

The subroutine at 1870-1890 is a simple routine looking for one-letter answers to yes/no questions and you may need to substitute an input routine with suitable checks if you cannot handle Get R$

Apart from those points, the rest of the

(continued on next page)

Listing 1 Instruction program

```
10 REM*********SIEGE*******
20 REM**                 **
30 REM**********BY R C MERRY***
40 REM**                 **
50 REM**********************
60 REM** 2-PART PROGRAM**
70 REM**                 **
80 REM** 1-INSTRUCTIONS**
90 REM** 2    GAME      **
100 REM**********************
110 PRINT"[redscreen]"[redcursor]"[redcursor]"[redcursor
```

(continued from previous page)

program is straightforward and should present no difficulty in programming. As far as playing the game is concerned, you should find that, after a while, the castle will usually have to surrender. At this point, you will want to make life a little harder and variations in the different variables will help you in this.

Table 1 can be used as a guide to the variables with which you can experiment. I would recommend increasing the values of man-days required for various items to be built, MD(I). These are contained in the Data statements in 200-210.

There are three sets of Data here for various times in the siege, in blocks of nine numbers. Other variables you could try are DN — line 120, WS, TS — line 120, GS — 150, or some of the random factors in the combat situations, e.g. lines 410-430, lines 910-950, etc. Above all, experiment, this way you will discover far more about the details of how the program works. ■

Table 1 Main variables used in the program

DN	Number of defenders
RD	Rations available to defenders
DS	Days into siege
AN	Number of attackers
WS	Strength of walls
TS	Strength of tower
GS	Strength of gate
UD	Days digging tunnel
UT	Days required to complete tunnel
TA	Attacking strength in an attack
TD	Defending strength in an attack
NA	Number assigned to an attack
AD	Attackers killed
DD	Defenders killed
UN	Unassigned men
UC	Unassigned carts
D1	Deserters
D2	Deserters
R1	Rations gathered
A1	Ammunition gathered
HW	Hits on wall
TC	Men killed in tunnel collapse
SA	Attackers killed if defenders sally forth
SD	Defenders killed if defenders sally forth
R2	Stolen rations
N3	Battering ram fully manned in attack
W	Current damage state of wall
T	Current damage state of tower
NS(I)	Names of equipment I=0 to 6
N(I)	Numbers of equipment I=0 to 6
D(I)	Accumulated man-days I=0 to 4
B(I)	Builds this turn I=0 to 4
MD(I)	Man-days required for each item I=0 to 8
AS	Do you wish to
BS	It takes
ZS	Various phrases, particularly when correct plurals are used

IN N(I) and NS(I), elements 5 and 6 refer to rations and ammunition units, respectively

IN MD(I), element 5 is the number of men need to collect rations, element 6 is the number of carts to collect rations, element 7 is the number of men need to collect ammunition, element 8 is the number of carts needed to collect ammunition

In all arrays, elements 0 to 4 refer to ballistas, carts, ladders, battering-rams and siege towers, respectively

Listing 2 Game program

```
10 REM SIEGE BY R C MERRY  JULY 1980
100 DIMN(8),NS$(8),MD(8),B(4),AS$(8)
110 RESTORE:PRINT"[CLR]"
150 DN=INT(RND(0)*100)+80:WS=RND(0)*50+1:GS=RND(0)*50+1:TS=RND(0)*50+1
120 N=0:FOR I=0TO4:N(I)=INT(RND(0)*50):NEXT
140 ...
150 GS=GS+GS:WS=WS+WS
160 IFRND(0)<.5THENUD=UD+1
170 RD=RND(0)*DN:RD=RD+DN
180 LOR1=0:FOR I=0TO4:LOR1=LOR1+N(I):NEXT
190 PRINT"[CLR]LORD LEFT [CURSOR] BATTERING RAM* *DEAD TOWER"
200 DATA ARTIFM *OVERLOAD*,UNIT *50 *30 10.66 100 20 1 45 3
210 DATA*60 *0 15 50 120 *0 1 50 2 *0 50 20 100 100 *0 1 50 4
220 FOR I=0TO8:READNS$(I),MD(I):NEXT:RESTORE:NEXT
230 I=RND(0)*8:NS$(I)=NS$(I)+" "
240 NS$(5)="VITAMINS":NS$(6)="SEVERELY DAMAGED"
250 NS$(7)="DYSENTERY":NS$(8)="DEBILITATED DAMAGED"
260 AS$=" ":BS$=AS$:ZS$=AS$:ZS$=ZS$+"S"
270 YN$="Y":UN=TS+GS
280 UN=UN+UCN:I=RND(0)*8:B(I)=B(I)+1:UN=UN-MD(I):NEXT
290 PRINT"[CLR]"
300 PRINT"THE ..."
310 PRINT"[RVS]YOU HAVE LEFT IN THE SIEGE *
320 PRINT"[RVS]WALLS HAVE ";WS;"*OF THE PRINTTHE[RVS]TOWER";TS;"*
330 PRINT"[RVS]GATES HAVE ";GS;"*OF THE PRINTTHE[RVS]";DN;"DEFENDERS"
340 PRINT"[RVS]TUNNEL HAVE ";UN;"*OF THE PRINTTHE[RVS]";RD;"DAYS"
350 PRINT"[RVS]DIGGING TOGETHER BY ";UN;"*MEN*";UN;"[RVS]"
360 PRINT"[RVS]IT IS NOW TO ";RD;"[RVS]";DS;"[RVS]"
370 IFRND(0)<.5THEN
380 IFN(0)<MD(0)*B(0)THEN
390 FOR I=1TO4:IFN(I)<N(I)*MD(I)THEN
400 NEXT
410 IFN(0)<MD(0)*B(0)THEN
420 FOR I=1TO4:IFN(I)<N(I)*MD(I)THEN
430 NEXT
440 GOSUB1 39
450 PRINTN$(0)"*MEN A BUILD ";B(0);"[RVS]OTHERPRINT S"
460 PRINT"[RVS]*TO *DIGGER* PRINTTHEDIG 10 S *DOSUBRIGHT IFN=0THEN518
470 IFN=0THEN
480 IFN(0)<MD(0)*B(0)THEN
490 A1=N(0)*MD(0):C=N(0)*B(0)
500 UN=UN+UC:UC=UC-C:A1=A1+INT RND(0)*B(0)-B/2 :N(0)=N(0)+A1
510 ...
520 PRINT"[RVS]*TO *DIGGER* PRINTTHEDIG 10 S *DOSUBRIGHT IFN=0THEN518
530 IFN=0THEN
540 IFN=0THEN
550 IFN(0)<MD(0)*B(0)THEN
560 PRINT"[RVS]*MEN TO FILL A LADDER TO UNDERMINE THE TOWER
570 IFN(0)<MD(0)*B(0)THEN
580 UN=UN+1 IF UN<MD(0)*B(0)THEN
590 ...
600 IFN(0)<MD(0)*B(0)THEN
610 IFRND(0)<.5THEN
620 IFN=0THEN
630 IFN=0THEN
640 IFN=0THEN
650 IFN=0THEN
660 IFN=0THEN
670 IFN=0THEN
680 IFN=0THEN
690 IFN=0THEN
700 IFN=0THEN
710 IFN=0THEN
720 IFN=0THEN
730 IFN=0THEN
740 IFN=0THEN
750 IFN=0THEN
760 IFN=0THEN
770 IFN=0THEN
780 IFN=0THEN
790 IFN=0THEN
800 IFN=0THEN
810 IFN=0THEN
```

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W H Smith brings ZX-81s to the High Street

BY TIM HARTNELL

AFTER RELYING on mail order for 18 months Sinclair Research has ventured into the retail field — via the giant newsagency chain, W H Smith. In 112 stores, Computer Know How centres feature displays based around an operating ZX 81 which is backed up by computer magazines and books.

The agreement, which began in September, is for a trial period of 12 months. "Both parties view the agreement as an experiment", says Clive Sinclair, inventor of the ZX 81. "We accepted Smith's approach because they've clearly researched the subject carefully, and take the new operation very seriously."

Under the sales contract, W H Smith has established the computer departments in its stores and although the company is selling a wide range of computer books and magazines, it is staying away from hardware — except for the ZX 81.

W H Smith has made the move into the computer field after its success with computer books and magazines. For several years, the only place you could find computer books was in specialist computer shops. Then the retail chains discovered the appeal of computers and began to stock the magazines. Now, few of the specialist stores bother to stock the British monthlies, relying instead on issues of U.S. magazines and books. The same is unlikely to happen with computers, because both W H Smith and Sinclair Research believe they will be tapping a whole new market — one which would not consider buying by mail order.

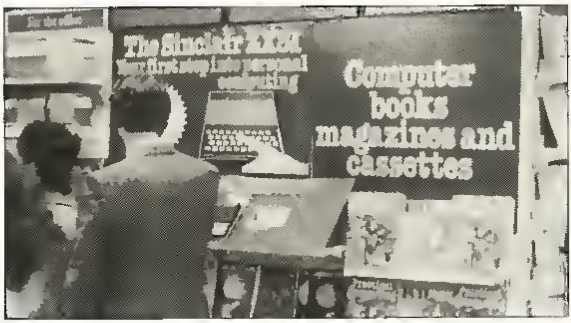
John Rowland, W H Smith market-development manager, said the company had decided to approach Clive Sinclair for the rights to sell the ZX-81, because Sinclair Research was the only company with "both a proven product available in the right quantities, and a proven sales record.

"Last year we started a small experiment with computer books and magazines", says Rowland, "and it worked well. So what we've done now is bring the computer-orientated publications together with an actual computer to create the Computer Know How section of the store."

Growing market

The first test market for computer products was the W H Smith store in the Brent Cross Shopping Centre. "We sold a good deal of books there", Rowland recalls. "We thought that we were at the beginning of something important, and that with suitable hardware, we'd have a combination which would prove successful."

Rowland says that the traditional strengths of W H Smith in selling books and magazines had increased in recent years with the development of the record and toy departments, the camera and film sections, and the small office and home products such as typewriters and calculators. Computers seemed the next logical step.



"We sell about 500,000 computer magazines a year", says Rowland. "CB is the latest boom, with a new magazine in the field just about every month, but computer magazines are very strong, and we expect this area to keep growing."

W H Smith started in the computer magazine field by importing magazines from the United States. "We had many American magazines", says Rowland, "and they sold very well". He says he found that the home-bred magazines quickly improved out of sight, and the need to import U.S. publications diminished.

As well as the ZX 81 and computer books and magazines, the Computer Know How section of the W H Smith's stores sell blank cassettes at 50p as well as the Sinclair produced software.

"We'll look at how the ZX 81 goes, and then decide if we want to carry other machines", says Rowland.

He is aware of the problems some people had had with early 16K memory packs, but says he has been assured by Sinclair Research that the problems associated with the RAMs had been ironed out.

"We'll be providing our own service on the computers and related hardware", says Rowland. "The machines will be covered by our normal audio guarantee. We normally repair cassette recorders and the like within 24 hours, and we imagine we'll be able to do the same with the ZX 81. Of course we've had no experience here — time will tell."

W H Smith has decided that if the ZX 81 experiment works, it could well become a major part of the company's marketing policy in the 1980s. The company believes that its strength in the book and magazine markets places it in a good position to attract potential purchasers of the machine.

W H Smith is aiming to sell as many machines during the five months retail agreement as Sinclair Research sell in one month by mail order — about 10,000 computers a month.

Bewildering selection

W H Smith sees the back-to-school and Christmas trading periods as very important for ZX-81 sales. The company expects sales to grow slowly as people gradually became aware that it is selling the computer. Then, when Christmas gift buying time arrives, W H Smith hopes people will automatically turn to their local branch as the source for the ZX 81.

About 300 W H Smith staff have been trained in the rudiments of the ZX 81. They have been shown how to plug in the machine, attach the 16K pack and the printer, and know the memory requirements of the five cassette software packs on sale. A number of magazines have been moved from the general magazine section to the Computer Know How departments. These include *Your Computer*, and its sister publication *Practical Computing*.

A number of books — none of which has any particular relevance to the ZX 81 — are also on sale in the special computer areas. Some, such as *Illustrating Basic* and *Introduction to microprocessing* are likely to prove bewildering and worse than useless for first-time computer buyers.

If you are having problems with your mail order ZX 81, do not try taking it into your nearest W H Smith claiming you bought it from there, and expecting to have it repaired. ZX 81s sold by W H Smith have a WH serial number. Staff have been told not to accept any ZX 81s without this serial number. ■

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VIDEO PLAN. Financial modelling package. Scaled down to fit the ZX81 computer. Space for up to 1000 × 10 digit numbers plus headings and titles	PLAN81S (Std) PLAN 81L (Lux)	7.95* 9.95*
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VIDEO-VIEW. Your own personal and private version of teletext/ viewdata.	VIEW81S (Std) VIEW81L (Lux)	5.95 7.95
VIDEO-MAP. A game with a serious purpose. A geographical tutor based on maps	MAP81S (Std) MAP81L (Lux)	5.95* 7.95*
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FORCE FIELD. Hostile UFOs attack a city. You control the force field which destroys their bombs.	FORCE	3.95*
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TEST-MATCH. For the student of cricket. Select your teams and see who wins	TEST	3.95
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*Not suitable for ZX80 with 8K ROM

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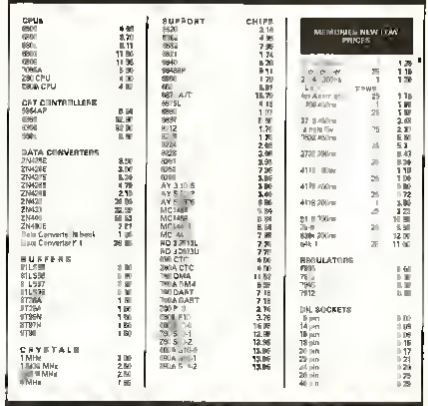

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ELECTRONICS FOR THE 80'S

JOYSTICK CONTROL FOR THE VIC~20

BY NICK HAMPSHIRE

TWO TYPES OF joystick can be attached to the Vic: a simple paddle switch joystick, and a potentiometer joystick. The principal application for joysticks is in interactive games and simulation programs. They are used to control the position of some object on the screen. This can be either the cursor or special graphics characters. Alternatively, the cursor can be used to change the viewing position, handling the joystick like the control stick on an aircraft.

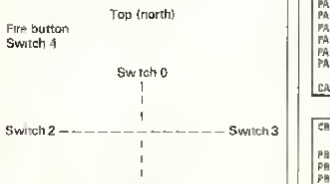
Choice of joystick depends on the application intended. If you want fine positional control where a particular joystick position has a distinct value, a potentiometer joystick is required. If you just want to tell the computer which of eight directions you require, then a switch joystick is the best choice.

A switch joystick consists of four switches mounted at right angles to each other. The joystick handle is connected to a mechanism which allows no more than two adjacent switches to be closed at any one time. The joystick handle has nine possible positions:

- One with no switches closed — the handle is vertical
- Four positions with one switch closed — handle in north, south, east and west positions
- Four positions with two switches closed — handle in north-east, south-east, south-west and north-west positions.

An extra switch is usually mounted on the end of the joystick handle; this is called the fire button and is usully used to indicate to the computer when the cursor or games figure is in the correct position on the screen.

Each of the switches is connected to one of the I/O lines from the 6522 VIAs. Their connection and the pin assignation for the output connector on the Vic are shown in figure 1. The joystick switches are arranged as follows:

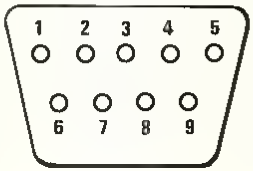


Switches 0, 1 and 2 and the fire button are connected to lines from VIA # 1 and switch 3 to a line from VIA # 2. The VIA memory locations used by the switch joystick are:

Hex	Decimal	Function
$9113	37139	Data direction register for port A VIA # 1
$9111	37137	Output register A bit 2 — joystick switch 0 bit 3 — joystick switch 1 bit 4 — joystick switch 2 bit 5 — Fire button
$9122	37154	Data-direction register for port B VIA # 2
$9120	37152	Output register B bit 7 — joystick switch 3

To read the joystick switch inputs, the I/O lines used must first be set into the input mode. This is done by setting the correspond ing bit of the data-direction register to 0.

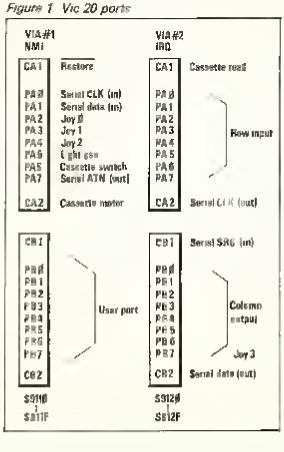
That poses one problem — the line used for joystick, switch 3 is also used for scanning the keyboard. Thus the keyboard cannot be used in full at the same time as the switch joystick, and the data-direction register should always be restored to normal after the joystick is used.



PIN#	TYPE	NOTE
1	Joy Ø	
2	Joy 1	
3	Joy 2	
4	Joy 3	
5	Pot Y	
6	Light Pen	
7	+5V	Max100mA
8	GND	
9	Pot X	

Figure 2
Game input/output on Vic 20

Figure 1 Vic 20 ports

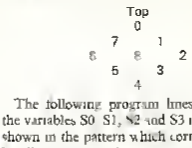


The following program can be used to initialise the data-direction registers and input the switch position:

```
10 POKE 37139,0 : POKE 37154,127 : set up DDRs
20 S=PEEK (37137) : input from VIA # 1
30 S0=(S AND 4)=0 : switch 0
40 S1=-(S AND 8)=0 : switch 1
50 S2=(S AND 16)=0 : switch 2
60 F=(S AND 32)=0 : Fire button
70 S=PEEK (37152) : input from VIA # 2
80 S3=-(S AND 128)=0 : switch 3
90 POKE 37154,255 : restore keyboard function
```

The variables S0, S1, S2 and S3 will normally be 0 but if the joystick handle is pointed in that direction, they will have a value of either 1 or -1.

If the Fire button is pressed, the variable F will have a value of 1, otherwise, it will be 0. These variables can be used to decode the joystick into the following pattern:



The following program lines will convert the variables S0, S1, S2 and S3 into the values shown in the pattern which correspond to the handle position and store in variable P:

```
100 DATA 7,0,1,6,8,2,5,4,3 : data for joystick pattern
110 FOR I=0 TO 2
120 FOR J=0 TO 2
130 READ JS(J,I) : put joystick pattern into array
140 NEXT J,I
150 X=1+(S2+S3) : Y=1+(S0+S1)
160 P=JS(X,Y) : set P to joystick pattern value
```

Switch joysticks for the Vic are identical to those produced by Atari and these devices can be used. Potentiometer joysticks will be covered in the next issue. ■

LANGUAGES

COMAL'S CHALLENGE

BBC English is widely received as the language's standard. In the world of computer languages, however, BBC Basic does command the same position — many argued for the adoption of the structured language Comal and against the creation of just another Basic dialect. Clare Gooding reports.

THE BBC COMPUTER most people seem agreed, is a good thing. It will certainly bring some understanding of computers and how to program them to people who would not otherwise have had a chance to find out — but many people in education are also saying that it is a chance lost.

The bone of contention is Basic — the language chosen as the teaching vehicle of the series of programmes scheduled to start in January 1982. Acorn, the small Cambridge based company, commissioned to produce the machine and the language for the series, found itself at the centre of a fierce debate over the choice of language originally planned to be a dialect along the lines of Microsoft Basic.

The strongest lobbyists are the champions of Comal, a language dating from the early seventies — not much younger than Basic — which started in Denmark as a teaching tool.

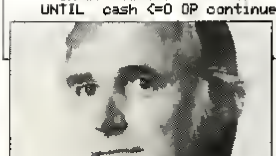
Comal — Common Algorithmic Language — developed from the ideas of one man, Borg Christensen, who was teaching computing at the State Teachers' College in Tonder, Denmark, in the early seventies. He designed Comal to combine the simplicity and ease of learning provided by Basic with the powerful control structures of Pascal.

Although he appreciated the simple syntax of Basic, he found that his students had the traditional problem of understanding programs which had been written some time ago, rather like untravelling a ball of wool with several ends.

The villain of the piece was the Goto instruction, which allowed programs to be written untidily with no clear flow of control. Goto was aided and abetted by meaningless variable names, which made debugging even more difficult.

Christensen resolved to build a language which would provide the structures which he found essential in teaching good programming habits. His priorities — to teach habits which would result in robust programs, easily read and understood by others long after they are written — were not so different from those drummed into professional programmers at software houses.

```
PRINT " **** ROULETTE **** "
REPEAT
  INPUT "How much money for playing - up to 100" cash
UNTIL cash > 0 AND cash <=100
REPEAT
  win =0, chance =RND(1,36), oddch =chance MOD 2
  REPEAT
    INPUT "Single number (1) or Odds/Evens (2)?" choice
  UNTIL choice = 1 OR choice = 2
  REPEAT
    PRINT "You have ", cash, " pounds",
    INPUT "How much do you bet?" bet
  UNTIL bet >0 AND bet <= cash
  cash = cash-bet
  CASE choice OF
  WHEN 1
    REPEAT
      INPUT "Guess number 1 - 36"  guess
    UNTIL guess >=1 AND guess <=36
    IF guess = chance THEN win =35*bet
  WHEN 2
    REPEAT
      INTPUT "Type 2 for Odd, 0 for even " guess
    UNTIL guess = 1 OR guess = 0
    IF guess = oddch THEN win =2*bet
  ENDCASE
  IF win > 0 THEN PRINT "You win",win,"pounds"
  IF win = 0 THEN PRINT "You lose."
  cash = cash + win
  PRINT "You have", cash," pounds"
  INPUT "Type 0 to quit, 1 to continue" continue
UNTIL cash <=0 OR continue = 0
```



The Comal roulette program and, left, chief U.K. proponent of the language, Roy Atherton

Comal spread extremely fast among educational users. Christensen himself is amazed at the way it has spread "from a corner of Denmark" to having strong following from all over Europe. Its main proponent in the U.K. is Roy Atherton of Bulmershe College in Reading, Berkshire, who explains how and why it became popular.

First, Comal draws strength from two great traditions: the practicality of the Fortran/Basic line and the educational, and practical appropriateness of the Algol/Pascal development. Secondly, the strong grip of Basic was acknowledged and there was no confrontation, simply extension and infiltration."

So, Comal's origins and growth could not be more different from the grand strategy of BBC Basic. It grew under its own impetus, from one man's attempts to meet the needs of one group of students.

BBC Basic has already received its fair share of slung mud: the choice of the language followed the decision that there was to be a series broadcast by the BBC, teaching anyone with a TV set about computers. The series was going to use a small, cheap microcomputer which would be within the reach of a wide range of people.

The contract for the BBC machine and the language went to an innovatory company with a high concentration of brainpower: Acorn Computer. The decision was a controversial one, because so much depended on it. Not only was there at stake a lucrative income from inevitably huge sales of the BBC machine, but more important, the *lingua franca* of the huge number of new computer devotees.

The BBC's choice of machine was limited by one factor: the contract must go to a British firm. The language was chosen by the BBC to preserve the status quo rather than to in-

TO BBC BASIC

novate the obvious choice was Basic whose most popular established dialect was the Microsoft one

The BBC's decisions have been attacked from all sides, not just by the advocates of Comal Clive Sinclair of Sinclair Research, which failed to win the contract itself, had hard words for the BBC's choice in his interview with *Your Computer* this September

"What the BBC is doing it is doing badly, and it is damaging the whole progress of computers in this country We have put a new version of Basic into our machines It has been highly praised in the U K and abroad because of its editing facilities

It is silly to ignore progress What the BBC has offered is Microsoft Basic If we had wanted to use Microsoftware we could have bought it off the shelf for $10,000

Acorn had to pull something better than Microsoft Basic out of the hat if it was going to forestall the cries of "I told you so" It is an unusual outfit, and it could probably only happen in Cambridge, where, as director Andy Hopper explained, if he cannot solve a problem for himself in a few hours, he pops across the road to have tea with a professor.

Acorn used technology which did not exist a year ago to create the BBC machine, and while it had to stick to the guideline specified by the BBC, there were ideas which Acorn was keen to implement to improve on Microsoft's Basic

The person responsible for implementing the BBC Basic was Roger Wilson, one of the many people who have filtered across from the university to Acorn Wilson is far from being a standard run of the mill programmer he knew machine code before taking his computing and mathematics course at Cambridge To give an idea of his skill, he was responsible for a 5Kbyte monitor in his first job for Acorn It was written by hand in machine code, programmed in hex, and it worked first time, he says with justifiable pride He probably would not approve of the description "genius" but he certainly has an infinite capacity for taking pains to ensure things are right

At university, Wilson became acquainted with that elegant language Algol W, and also with BCPL, the portable systems programming language developed by Martin Richards at the Computer Laboratory in Cambridge Both these, and the structured ideas of Pascal, have influenced his ideas on how flexible, powerful, and elegant a language should be.

Some of the quirky but useful functions in the original Acorn Basic developed from his BCPL influence For example, in directional operators, where the contents of one value points to an address holding another When he turned to the task of writing the BBC Basic, he had his rich source of experience and the strait jacket of BBC specifications "It was difficult to start again but I knew more about it and guided it towards Pascal My level of interpreter skill was such that I could write a single pass Pascal compiler"

Wilson had to work within the Microsoft framework — the one unavoidable structure was that the Basic must be Microsoft compatible Acorn already had 12K of working language which could be "bent at will" for the BBC, and Wilson set about bending it towards Pascal, thrashing out the borderline with the advice of John Coll, consultant to the Micro Users in Secondary Education group, filtering out features to leave them with a core on which to build

From that point, Wilson built a Basic interpreter with functions which behave like Pascal, including multi line procedures and long verbal names "There are few new statements but they are more powerful

Unlike Comal BBC Basic is hot off the press, and has had no chance to "infiltrate" the existing market on the strength of its virtues It will have a hype which will easily exceed any publicity other languages might receive, and it stands a chance of becoming a *de facto* standard for the same reasons that Microsoft Basic was picked as a starting point in the first place many people will be using it

Like Comal, it owes much to Basic, and something to Pascal and is a compromise rather than a major attempt at innovation Basic and Comal share the same goal to educate people who have had no prior contact with computing and programming skills Comal attacks the root of programming, the way people think about problems, according to Roy Atherton

He describes the six structures which he considers an essential part of problem analysis and program design For Next, Repeat-Until, While-Endwhile, If-Then Else, Cases and procedures These six can follow one another, be nested, or in the case of procedures, they can be defined and called

The advantages he says Comal can offer over Basic derive mainly from these structures Putting problems in these terms helps analysis, and means that a clear diagram or flowchart can be built which the actual shape of the written program closely shadows.

Such simple aids as indentation can be a great teaching aid, and teachers using Comal generally find that if there is a problem among the dreaded nested If statements, then it can be traced if the indentation does not "come home" The naming of procedures is also a helpful alternative to Goto's and there is no danger of landing accidentally in the middle of a subroutine

While Comal was developed in a small way, restricted to a sparely used micro the RC

(continued on next page)

The Basic version of roulette and, right Chris Curry of Acorn

```
10 REM Roulette test program to demonstrate the
20 REM BASIL interpreter in action !!!!!!!!!
30 beep$=" " : nul$=STR$(18 ' ) bell$=CHR$(7) REM makes a noise
40 CLS PRINT STR$(55 '*' " Roulette " STRING$(55 '*')
50 REPEAT PRINT TAB A 5 "beep$+ How much money available"+nul$
60   INPUT TAB(5,5) funds  beep$+bell$
70   UNTIL funds>0 AND funds <=100  beep$+"
80 REPEAT chance=RND 36)  odd chance=chance MOD 2
90   PRINT  "You have " funds" rounds currently"
100  REPEAT PRINT TAB(2 10) beep$+ How much money to bet"+nul$
110    INPUT TAB(POS-10 10),bet  beep$+bell$
120    UNTIL bet 0 AND bet<=funds  beep$+"
130  REPEAT PRINT TAB(3 12) beep$+"Or which number"+nul$,
140    INPUT TAB(POS-10 12),guess  beep$+bell$
150    UNTIL guess>=0 AND guess <=36  beep$+"
160  odd guess=guess MOD 2
170  FORZ=0TO800 NEXT REM pause for 2 5 secs
180  response$="You have lost your bet" winp
190  IF guess=chance win=35*bet response$="WELL DONE !!!
200  IF win=0 AND odd guess=odd chance win=bet response$=" Odd/even only"
210  funds=funds+win*bet
220  PRINT response$, IF win<0 PRINT" you have won " win
230  PRINT "it was, of course, a ";chance
240  IF funds=0 PRINT"So you are wiped out" END
250  REPEAT PRINT TAB(0,18) beep$+"Another go Y/N"+nul$,
260    INPUT TAB(POS-10 18),ans$  beep$=bell$
270    UNTIL ans$="Y" OR ans$="N"
280  FOR line=0 TO 18 PRINT TAB(0 line) SPC(40) NEXT
290  UNTIL ans$="N"
300 PRINT "Finished with ";funds" Pounds"
310 END
```

(continued from previous page)

Piccolo, it has grown and is even becoming ambitious

The interest in Comal has grown so quickly in the last year that Commodore was persuaded first to make a ROM version available — not very powerful as it left little room for manoeuvre — and then to start work on a RAM version

The team at Acorn faced slightly different problems, namely a compromise which was not of their own making, and a huge audience to their efforts, clamouring for favourite whizzo features to be included "We're trying to develop computer awareness", explains one of the team, Paul Bond "The difficulty is talking to people who don't talk our language, and the compromise is fitting it into the space available while giving people what they want"

Roger Wilson probably would have started from a different point if it had been possible, but handicapped by the lack of any real informed guidance from the BBC, he has jettisoned as much as possible and worked in his own ideas on programming

"You have to look at it from the point of view of the naive user without ignoring the needs of the more advanced users The advanced utilities have to be provided in such a way that the beginners don't trip over them, while sophisticated users don't feel that it's a machine limited to beginners

"At the same time, it's important to keep to the spirit of Basic, so that it isn't overloaded with facilities out of all recognition That's the danger in building in features which other languages such as Comal and Pascal provide"

Bond adds "People should be able to express themselves easily, one should try to cope with the way people think, and the way they would like languages to be, but one shouldn't try to create non standard features for the sake of it"

Other features have been limited by the Microsoft/BBC strictures Roger Wilson's original design included Pascal-like labels which the BBC dropped, and the If Then Else statement was limited to single line format The Basic can cope with numeric procedures preceded by the statement Proc, and includes a Repeat Until verb for handling loops

Many of the Microsoft pitfalls have been avoided BBC Basic will not allow you to use a variable that has not been declared so that "finger trouble" variables are not created and set to 0 Instead, the user is alerted to the fact that there is no such variable declared and it must, therefore, be a keying error

Integer handling has been improved and far more emphasis put on function and decision handling There are also features like in-string subscripting which can be powerful for text processing As well as cramming in the Microsoft necessities and the Pascal-ish variations Acorn has paid attention to the speed of the interpreter "We've put in as much speed as possible", says Roger Wilson. "I did my best considering the limitations"

Roy Atherton has criticisms even for the parts of BBC Basic which have attempted to look like structures "They are only three quarters of the way there the If Then Else is restricted, not global and not laid out properly The odd thing is that properly made procedures wouldn't be difficult to provide in Basic"

Borg Christensen is even more scathing "In England you have a great tradition for good programming Instead of seeing this the BBC wants you to ape the Americans in a field where they are definitely bad, and where you could be very good That many progams have been written in Basic, doesn't matter They are very few compared to the immense number which are going to be written in the future In Denmark we have learned that people will turn away from Basic if they are given something better simultaneously easier and more powerful"

David Johnson Davies of Acornsoft has solid reasons why Comal would not do for the BBC machine, apart from the necessity of Microsoft compatibility it is a very large language, and not compatible with existing Basic While the recently released Comal 80 from Metanic occupies 36K to Acorn Basic's 16K, Christensen contends that the early versions of Comal including Goto, Gosub, Return and On Goto, which are all redundant statements by Comal standards, only took 12 percent more space than the Basic interpreter — presumably the RC7000s Basic is said to be a subset of Comal much as Microsoft Basic is a subset of BBC Basic you can restrict yourself to it if you wish

Roger Wilson's objections to Comal are that apart from its unacceptable size, it is limited in its mathematical functions, and only a small subset of Comal statements can be used in the interactive command mode He does not like the frequent use of semicolons, and he points out that Comal will not do type conversion if an integer becomes a real number, nor can the Comal Len — length of string — function find the length of sub-strings, only string variables, both of which he finds strange

Roger Wilson and Roy Atherton agreed to illustrate their protegés by writing programs in BBC Basic and Comal from the same specification It is dangerous to compare the abilities of the two languages on the strength of one very limited illustration, but to give examples of how the two languages deal with the same problem at least show the difference in approach

There are features which are fundamental to the different styles of the two, like numbering and having more than one statement to a line, on which the champions of both languages will never agree structures are the main stumbling block

"Why not go the whole hog and use Pascal?" asks the Acorn faction "Because Comal is simpler", reply the Comal-ites, and there the two engage in a conflict about what is simple and what is not The arguments will probably still be going when BBC Basic has established its own niche

Meanwhile, it seems fair to give the last word to Roger Wilson and Acorn they have all been a little too busy working on the project to answer the bad press and criticism they have received "While Comal's structure is better than Basic, it cannot compete with Basic for straightforward ease of use and small size Perhaps Comal is better than the BBC realised, but on the other hand, our Basic is far more powerful than people seem to think" ■

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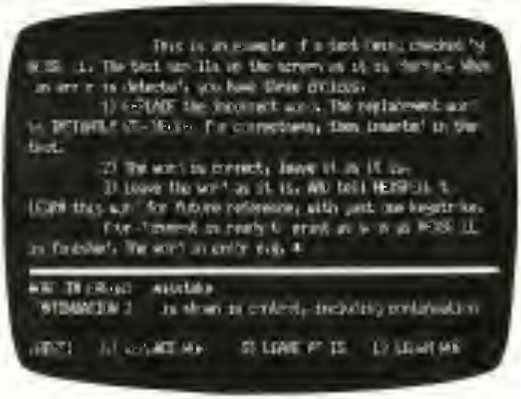

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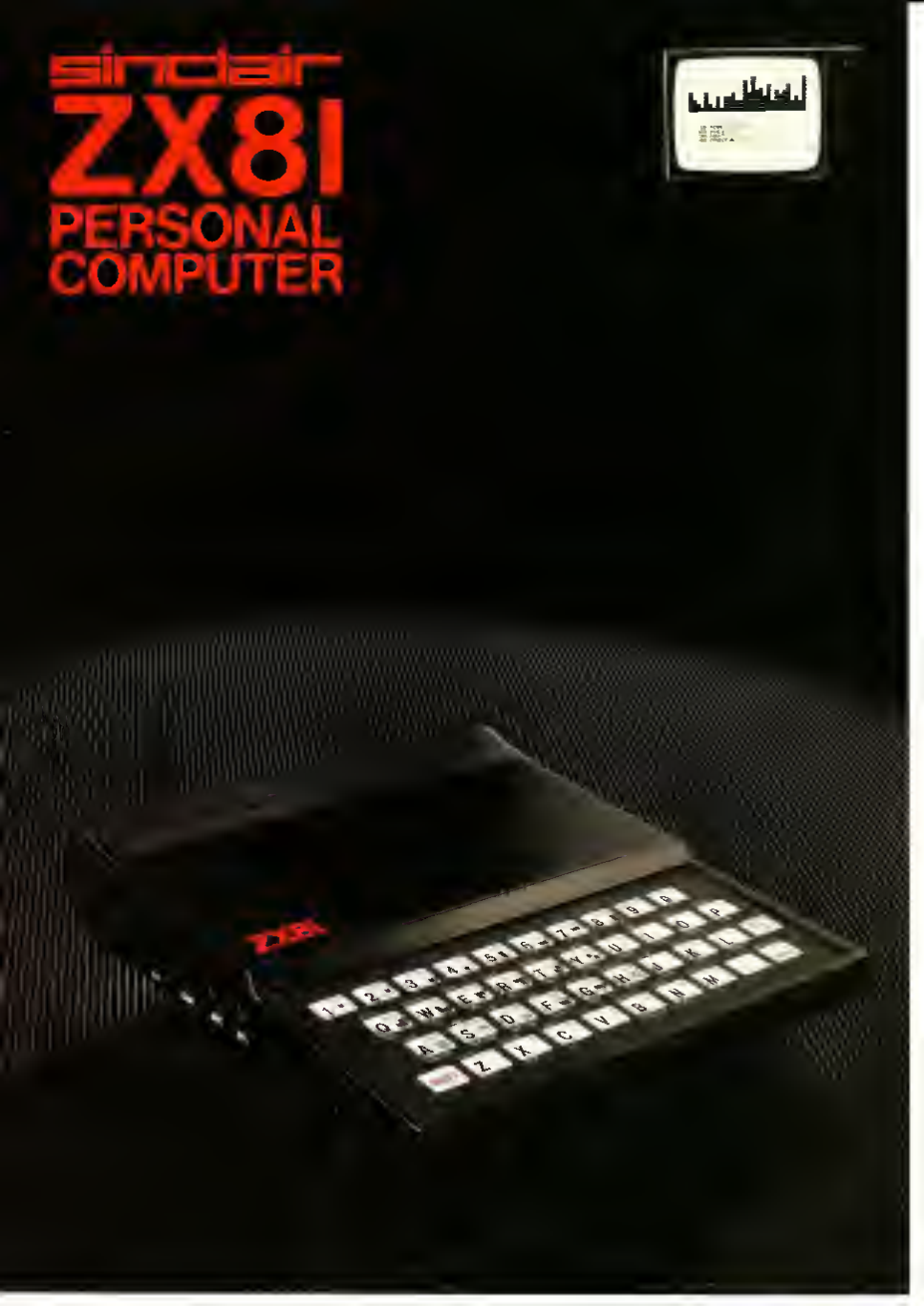
sinclair ZX81 PERSONAL COMPUTER



Sinclair ZX81 Personal Comp the heart of a system that grows with you.

1980 saw a genuine breakthrough – the Sinclair ZX80, world's first complete personal computer for under £100. Not surprisingly, over 50 000 were sold.

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And the ZX81 incorporates other operation refinements – the facility to load and save named programs on cassette, for example, *and* to drive the new ZX Printer.

New BASIC manual

Every ZX81 comes with a comprehensive, specially written manual – a complete course in BASIC programming, from first principles to complex programs.

Kit: £49.95

Higher specification, lower price – how's it done?
Quite simply, by design. The ZX80 reduced the chips in a working computer from 40 or so, to 21. The ZX81 reduces the 21 to 4!

The secret lies in a totally new master chip. Designed by Sinclair and custom-built in Britain, this unique chip replaces 18 chips from the ZX80!

New, improved specification
- Z80A micro-processor – new faster version of the famous Z80 chip, widely recognised as the best ever made.
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- Unique syntax-check and report codes identify programming errors immediately.
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- Graph drawing and animated-display facilities.
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- Randomise function – useful for games as well as serious applications.
- Cassette LOAD and SAVE with named programs.
- 1K-byte RAM expandable to 16K bytes with Sinclair RAM pack.
- Able to drive the new Sinclair printer.
- Advanced 4-chip design: micro-processor, ROM, RAM, plus master chip – unique, custom-built chip replacing 18 ZX80 chips.

Built: £69.95

Kit or built – it's up to you!
You'll be surprised how easy the ZX81 kit is to build: just four chips to assemble (plus, of course the other discrete components) – a few hours work with a fine-tipped soldering iron. And you may already have a suitable mains adaptor – 800 mA at 9 V DC nominal unregulated (supplied with built version).

Kit and built versions come complete with all leads to connect to your TV (colour or black and white) and cassette recorder.

Available now- the ZX Printer for only £49.95

Designed exclusively for use with the ZX81 (and ZX80 with 8K BASIC ROM), the printer offers full alphanumerics and highly sophisticated graphics.

A special feature is COPY, which prints out exactly what is on the whole TV screen without the need for further intructions

At last you can have a hard copy of your program listings – particularly useful when writing or editing programs

And of course you can print out your results for permanent records or sending to a friend

Printing speed is 50 characters per second, with 32 characters per line and 9 lines per vertical inch.

The ZX Printer connects to the rear of your computer – using a stackable connector so you can plug in a RAM pack as well. A roll of paper (65 ft long x 4 in wide) is supplied along with full instructions

16K-byte RAM pack for massive add-on memory.

Designed as a complete module to fit your Sinclair ZX80 or ZX81, the RAM pack simply plugs into the existing expansion port at the rear of the computer to multiply your data/program storage by 16!

Use it for long and complex programs or as a personal database Yet it costs as little as half the price of competitive additional memory

With the RAM pack you can also run some of the more sophisticated ZX Software – the Business & Household management systems for example.

How to order your ZX81

BY PHONE – Access, Barclaycard or Trustcard holders can call 01-200 0200 for personal attention 24 hours a day, every day

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To Sinclair Research Ltd FREEPOST 7, Cambridge, CB2 1YY

Qty	Item	Code	Item price £	Order Total £
	Sinclair ZX81 Personal Computer kit(s) Price includes ZX81 BASIC manual excludes mains adaptor	12	49.95	
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	16K-BYTE RAM pack	16	49.95	
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How the ZX81 compares with other personal computers

SYSTEM IDENTIFICATION		ZX81	ZX80	ACORN ATOM	APPLE II PLUS	PET 2001	TRS 80 LEVEL I	TRS 80 LEVEL II
ROM		8K	4K	8K	8K	14K	4K	12K
GUIDE PRICE	Basic unit – inc VAT	£70	£100	£175	£630	£435	£290	£375
	Unit plus 16K RAM (*1K RAM)	£120	£150	£265*	£630	£530	£360	£375
COMMANDS	LIST LOAD NEW RUN SAVE	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
STATEMENTS	PRINT INPUT LET GOTO GOSUB/RETURN FOR/NEXT IF/THEN	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	STEP	●		●	●	●	●	●
	TAB	●			●	●	●	●
ARITHMETIC FUNCTIONS	ABS RND	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	INT	●			●	●	●	●
	ATN COS EXP LOG SGN SIN SQR TAN	●			●	●		●
	ARCSIN ARCOS	●						
STRING FUNCTIONS	CHR$	●	●		●	●		●
	LEN	●		●	●	●		●
	ASC(CODE) STR$ VAL INKEY$	●				●		●
NUMBERS	FLOATING PT ±10 ³⁸	●			●	●	●	●
	INTEGERS		●	●	●	●		●
NUMERIC VARIABLES	A Z			●			●	
	AA ZO				●	●		●
	An Zn n = any alphanumeric string	●	●					
STRING VARIABLES	A$ & B$						●	
	A$ to Z$	●	●	●				
	An$ to Zn$ n = any alphanumeric character				●	●		●
NUMERIC ARRAYS	SINGLE DIMENSIONAL		●	●			●	
	MULTI DIMENSIONAL	●			●	●		●
DISPLAY	ROWS	24	24	16	24	25	16	16
	COLUMNS	32	32	32	40	40	64	64
	LOW RES GRAPHICS (< 7000 pixels)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	HI RES GRAPHICS (> 40000 pixels)			●	●			
SPECIAL FEATURES	USR (CALL LINK)	●	●	●	●	●		●
	PEEK, POKE (OR EQUIV)	●	●	●	●	●		●

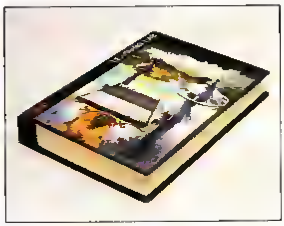
Sinclair software on cassette.

The unprecedented popularity of the ZX Series of Sinclair Personal Computers has generated a large volume of programs written by users.

Sinclair has undertaken to publish the most elegant of these on pre-recorded cassettes. Each program is carefully vetted for interest and quality, and then grouped with others to form single-subject cassettes.

Software currently available includes games, junior education, and business/household management systems. You'll receive a Sinclair ZX Software catalogue with your ZX81 – or see our separate advertisement in this magazine.

The ultimate course in ZX81 BASIC programming.



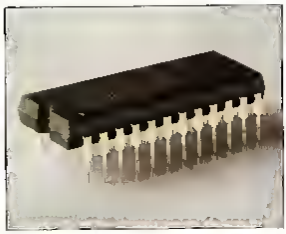
Some people prefer to learn their programming from books. For them the ZX81 BASIC manual is ideal.

But many have expressed a preference to learn *on* the machine, *through* the machine. Hence the new cassette-based ZX81 Learning Lab.

The package comprises a 160-page manual and 8 cassettes. 20 programs, each demonstrating a particular aspect of ZX81 programming, are spread over 6 of the cassettes. The other two are blank practice cassettes.

Full details with your Sinclair ZX81.

If you own a Sinclair ZX80...



The new 8K BASIC ROM used in the Sinclair ZX81 is available to ZX80 owners as a drop in replacement chip. (Complete with new keyboard template and operating manual.)

With the exception of animated graphics, all the advanced features of the ZX81 are now available on your ZX80 – including the ability to drive the Sinclair ZX Printer.

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ZX BOOKS

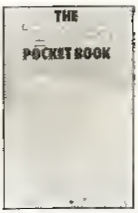
The success of Sinclair's ZX 80 and ZX-81 has led to the publication of an astonishing number of books Martyn Thomas helps you pick your way through the ZX library with his comparison of 15 of the main titles.

THERE ARE a number of things you should have clear about yourself, and about your computer, before you try to pick the books which will be of most help and interest

Some books were written for the ZX 80 and appeared before the ZX 81 was widely available Some of the ZX-81 books deal in detail with the facilities of the new 8K ROM for the ZX 80, some are rather more sketchy — depending we suspect, on which computers the authors had available Some books assume you have the memory extension packs the better games in particular all require more than the basic 1K systems

Then there are your own skills and ambitions Are you looking for a book of programs, so that you can play with your computer and impress the neighbours without learning a line of Basic? Or, at the other extreme, do you want to learn in detail how the monitor works so that you can include calls to useful ROM routines in your own machine-code programs?

First, let us examine the Sinclair manuals The ZX 80 was supplied with a rather poor manual, which contained a description of how to set up the computer, a brief introduction to each of the Basic statements, and little else There was a section describing the action of the Basic interpreter and the organisation of the systems variables but it required considerable previous experience to interpret



usefully although it was invaluable to experienced programmers The ZX 80 manual was badly bound too, and tended to fall apart if used often

By comparison the ZX 81 manual is very good It is spirally bound, far more robust and more substantial The extra space is used for a much fuller explanation of the Basic commands and for an introduction to machine-code programming using USR However, no attempt is made to explain what the machine instructions actually do

ZX 81 Basic is, of course, a larger language than ZX-80 Basic, so this, too, accounts for some of the extra pages The ZX 80 manual was rather limited as an introduction to programming for a complete beginner, so many of the books which were published for the ZX-80 users contained some extra programming instructions

The ZX-81 manual, however, provides enough explanation and exercises to enable most users to learn to program after a fashion, by following this text alone We recommend that you become thoroughly familiar with the Sinclair manual for your ZX 80 or ZX 81 before you rush out to buy another book There is a great deal of valuable information

to be learned from both Do not take all the ZX 81 exercises seriously, however — particularly not exercise 4 on page 111

For the rest of this review, we shall presume that you have digested your Sinclair manual and you are still not satisfied What other books are available, what do they contain, and how useful will they be to you?

Four of the books we reviewed are really useful only to owners of original ZX 80s with the 4K integer Basic ROM The first, the *ZX-80 pocket book*, is a helpful handbook written at a basic level The author Trevor Toms sets out to build on the knowledge you will have gained from reading the Sinclair manual and shows you how to write better and more successful programs by planning ahead and by adopting various tricks of style

It also contains 12 reasonably good games, showing how much and how little can be squeezed into the 1K RAM of the unexpanded ZX 80 The de luxe versions of some games, for larger RAM sizes, should encourage RAM sales

The *ZX-80 pocket book* explains how machine code can be loaded into ZX 80 RAM and executed, but it does not provide any tuition in machine-code programming, so the reader seeking that knowledge must turn elsewhere Overall, this can be seen as the book which turns the Sinclair ZX-80 manual into the book it should have been

The second book, *Hints and tips for the ZX 80*, contains precisely what its title suggests, a collection of useful tricks for making programming easier and programs shorter and faster It is clearly the result of a great deal of thought, insight and experimentation with the ZX 80, and represents a very inexpensive way of acquiring the benefits of months of programming experience

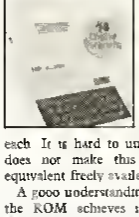
This book is privately printed, from a normal typewriter script, and is only 48 pages long It is, however, most informative, though, and mostly accurate — although the listing on the last page contains a Gosub to a line which has to be retrieved from a program listing two pages earlier

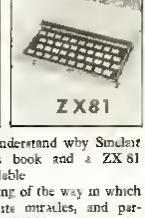
The useful routine listings include a renumber routine and an active display Unfortunately, the description of each routine concentrates only on essentials, so an opportunity of teaching more general programming techniques by example is missed

The third of these ZX 80 books is the *ZX-80 Magic Book* It is an odd collection of simple games and more unusual and advanced routines, interspersed with discussion on topics such as plotting graphs, and random numbers There are interesting articles on improving the television display with the help of a soldering iron and adding extra memory and input-output

Among the other games is an unconventional routine which allows you to generate music and record it on tape through the cassette interface No other book offers this, and although as presented the routine allows you to generate only pre-composed programs, it would be possible to modify it to allow keyboard entry So if you see yourself as the next Stockhausen, perhaps this book is for you

The last book in this section is very special and most highly recommended Ian Logan's *ZX-80 Monitor Listing* lists the 4K monitor of the ZX 80 in hexadecimal and in Z-80 machine instructions, divides it into sections of functions and offers a brief description for





each It is hard to understand why Sinclair does not make this book and a ZX 81 equivalent freely available

A good understanding of the way in which the ROM achieves its miracles, and particularly of how calls to ROM routines can be incorporated in programs, greatly increases the power of the computer and the scope of programs which can be written for it

The books in this section are essentially books for the 4K ROM ZX 80 although they have been updated with some details of the 8K ROM The first, *Learning Basic with your Sinclair ZX-80* is the only book to this review from a mainstream book publisher, Newnes Technical Books an imprint of Butterworths better known as publishers of the *All England Law Reports*. This shows clearly in the excellent quality of type and binding, photographs and line diagrams

The text is, indeed, a tutorial text in Basic using the ZX 80 It is very gentle, very easy, and will be found most suitable for anyone who is finding the Sinclair manual rather hard

(continued of next page)

(continued from previous page)

to understand The author, Robin Norman, includes 14 programs They are mostly games, but they serve well as examples of programming techniques and the documentation for each one is particularly good

This book is strongly recommended for complete beginners, and will be found valuable even for new ZX-81 owners A single-page appendix describes the ZX 80 8K ROM thus justifying the book's inclusion in this section

Our second ZX 80/ZX 81 book is the second edition of the *ZX 80 companion*, from the excellent Linsac team of Bob Maunder, Terry Trotter and Ian Logan This is a superb introductory book for ZX 80 users who want to become serious programmers, especially if they have an interest in machine-code programming

There is considerable explanation of the basic theory of computers, a good summary of ZX-80 Basic, interspersed with detailed explanations clearly marked as intended for advanced users A good description of the 4K monitor offers examples of how the monitor subroutines can be called usefully from Basic programs Combined with Ian Logan's full monitor listing described, this really is the key to the fullest possible use of a 4K ROM ZX 80

The last chapter contains seven games from the Linsac catalogue A four page appendix describes the 8K ROM, including a sample program to illustrate the moving display

Making the most of your ZX 80 is the last of our ZX-80 books which make passing reference to the 8K ROM Written by Tim Hartnell of the National ZX 80 and ZX-81 users' club, this book aims to remove the feelings you may have developed that the ZX-80 is a rather limited computer and less impressive than you had hoped

It achieves this by means of more than 60 programs, each interesting in itself, and each introducing a new feature of the ZX 80 In this way, the reader learns new features of ZX-80 Basic painlessly The idea is reasonable, in practice, things do not work out quite so well

The games do not use the full power of the ZX-80 and are limited — they are all games, despite claims made in the section "The ZX-80 as teacher" The documentation of each program is less useful than it could be — fewer programs, better described, would be an improved formula — and the style of many games is rather juvenile

Now let us turn to ZX-81 books which are also suitable for 8K-ROM ZX 80s The six books in this section are mostly updated or upgraded versions of books reviewed earlier Tim Hartnell takes the prize for the most prolific author, the first three of the six books are written partly or wholly by him

The first is *Getting acquainted with your ZX-81 and new-ROM ZX-80* and contains 75 programs including a reasonable program to play draughts As might be expected, the greatest changes in the style of programs written for the ZX-80 is that far better use is made of the display The basic 1K RAM ZX 81 is even more limited in capacity than the 1K RAM ZX 80, so all interesting games rely on the availability of more memory

50 rip-roaring games for the ZX-80 and ZX 81 has been included in this section as an honour even though the programs are written for the old ROM ZX 80 since instructions are given for converting them to the ZX 81 or new ROM

The programs really are most impressive, compressing more into 1K of old ROM ZX 80 RAM than I would have thought possible There is even a 1K version of draughts and a program to generate music Strongly recommended as an alternative to selling your ZX 80 if you think you have outgrown it and need a ZX 81 Recommended, too, to ZX-81 owners the exercise of converting the programs will be instructive, and the results will be well worthwhile You will really need the 16K RAM pack or extra 1-3K on the 8K ROM ZX 80, though

Stretching your ZX-81 or ZX-80 to its limits follows the earlier Tim Hartnell and Trevor Sharples formula of teaching by example painlessly, while you are playing interesting games Assuming you have some knowledge of Basic, you should have little trouble making these games work on your computer, although we feel the authors have been lazy in not annotating each program clearly with the ROM and minimal RAM requirements

The ZX 81 pocket book is Trevor Toms' up date of his ZX 80 book completely written for the 8K ROM ZX-80 and ZX 81 It is an excellent companion, again building on the knowledge of Basic you will have gained from the Sinclair manual, and benefiting greatly from the additional power the 8K ROM machines have

Whereas the *ZX 80 pocket book* was rather fundamental and simple, the *ZX-81 pocket book* contains a great deal of valuable hints, tips, experience and program fragments while remaining easy to read The last chapter of this book contains guidelines for writing a ZX-81 version of Adventure — justifiably the best known and most popular computer game. There is even a complete version of Adventure for those fortunate enough to have the 16K RAM pack This book is strongly recommended

Hints and tips for the ZX-81 is again an updated and re written version of an earlier ZX 80 book The author, Andrew Herson, has concentrated on techniques for making maximum use of the basic 1K RAM ZX-81, so all the programs given run on this unexpanded machine In addition, the section on machine code programming has been expanded to 27 pages containing a description of the Z-80 architecture, the instruction set, and how to write machine-code routines

The final book is the latest from Linsac, the *ZX-81 companion* written by Bob Maunder This is an excellent introduction to the advanced features of the ZX 81, well up to the standard of their earlier books

Chapter four provides the very first listing of the 8K ROM monitor, with useful routine entry points and descriptions Once again, Linsac has produced the book for the serious end of the market — the programmer rather than the game player

CONCLUSIONS

- The ZX-81 is a better machine than the 8K-ROM ZX 80 by a great amount — all the authors seem agreed about this
- You really need the 16K RAM pack for the ZX-81 if you plan to do any serious programming, 1K of RAM is simply not enough
- Surprisingly, none of the books reviewed could be described as bad — unlike many books on other microcomputers You will find each provides a satisfactory amount of enjoyment and information
- However, the Tim Hartnell series seems aimed at the games-player whereas the Linsac books are far away the best for serious programmers
- Do not overlook *Hints and Tips* books — both are good value and quite fascinating

THE BOOKS

The ZX 80 pocket book by Trevor Toms Available from Phipps Associates 3 Downs Avenue Epsom Surrey KT18 5HQ 03727 21215

50 rip roaring games for the ZX 80 and ZX 81 edited by Jeff Wendich Available from Database Consultancy 105 Fairholme Avenue Gidea Park Romford £4 95

Stretching your ZX 81 or ZX 80 to its limits by Trevor Sharples and Tim Hartnell Available from Computer Publications Unit 3 33 Woodthorpe Road Ashford Middlesex TW15 2RP £6 95

Hints and tips for the ZX 80 by A D Hewson and J S Hewson Available from Hewson Consultants 7 Grahame Close Slewbury Oxfordshire OX11 9QE 48 pages £3 50 including postage

Learning Basic with your Sinclair ZX 80 by Robin Norman Newnes Microcomputer Books (Butterworth & Co 153 pages ISBN 0 408 011017

The ZX 80 Magic Book Available from Timedata Limited 57 Swallowdale Basildon Essex SS15 5BZ 64 pages £4 75 including postage

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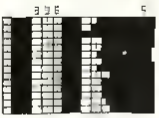

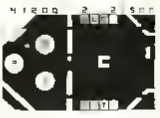

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AN INTERPRETER FOR THE

Beginning with an explanation of the principles used to translate high-level languages into machine code, John Dawson continues his series by outlining the structure of a control-orientated interpreter.

IN THE SERIES so far, we have looked at the general principles of closed-loop feedback systems and the similarities between control systems in biological and computer applications.

In the first article, I showed how a radio transmitter could be used to send one form of control information from a computer to a remote device. In the second article, I presented some ideas for interfacing the signal from a radio control receiver to a hefty DC motor.

I used a common-or-garden car windscreen wiper motor and a comparatively simple electronic circuit to show how an effect — regulating the speed of a DC motor — can be achieved with the minimum cost and time spent in construction.

The extent to which you may wish to go beyond the ideas in the article to a finished, definitively engineered product is entirely up to you — there are many reference works on control electronics which will help you to improve, say, the pulse width modulation circuit. You might, for example, include feed back control of the motor speed to make it independent of the load on the motor.

Exhausted by analogue electronics and metalwork, this month we shall examine the foundations of a control orientated interpreter for the Microtan. I shall indicate which sections of the machine code are specific to the Microtan so that those with access to other machines with 6502 CPUs may modify the code accordingly.

Some form of go between is required to cross the no man's land between the language of humans and the internal machine-code instructions obeyed by a computer. People recognise and understand the relationships between numerals, characters and symbols, the internal store of the computer, the various electronic circuits and logic elements are able to respond only to binary patterns of on or off electrical impulses.

The binary machine-code instructions used by a computer are known generally as object code, while a series of instructions written in a high-level language is known as source code.

The purpose of every language other than machine code is to create a bridge between instructions we can write and recognise and the binary machine code which will achieve the desired effect. A program written in Basic will calculate results through a series of machine code instructions which are invisible or transparent to the user.

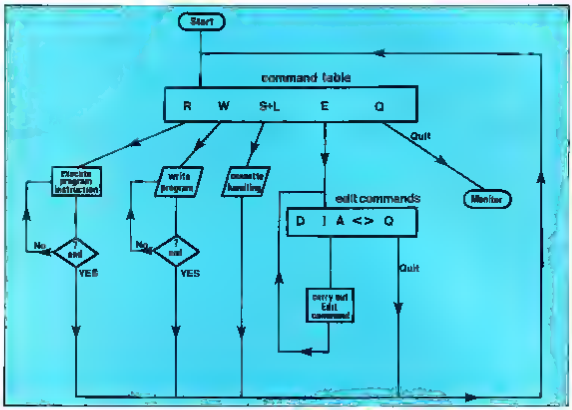


Figure 1 The minimum elements for a high level interpreter

There is a hierachy of computer languages ranging from fundamental machine code, in which each instruction entered by the operator produces one instruction to be executed by the computer, to high-level languages where a spoken command may initiate sustained computing activity.

For example, reports from the States already suggest that intelligent microwave ovens are a distinct possibility. The oven would contain a program to allow it to respond to the instruction sequence:

'Cook the pork casserole for 10 minutes or until the thermometer probe has reached 110 degrees for three minutes. Tell me when it's done — I'm in the sitting room.'

"Cook" is a reserved word in this instruction sequence and "pork casserole" a variable. "thermometer probe" is an input device and the alert at the end of the process is to be routed to an output device in the sitting room.

There are many high-level computer languages and it is possible to debate endlessly and fruitlessly which is the best language. There is no best computer language — computers exist to solve problems and a computer language is purposeless until put to some task. Certain languages are more successful for some applications than others.

Cobol, or COmmon Business Orientated Language, was designed for general commercial use, originally under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Defense. Program steps in Cobol are specified by means of instructions expressed in stylised English statements which can be recognised by the compiler and translated into a sequence of machine-code instructions.

The program statements consist of reserved words which have a special significance, enabling the compiler to generate the appropriate machine instructions for the particular operation required and identifying labels used by the programmer to refer to units of data. For example, the Cobol statement

Add London weighting To Salary

uses the reserved words "Add" and "To" to generate the machine coding which will perform an addition in which a quantity, London weighting, is added to another quantity, Salary.

Specialised high-level languages have been written for many purposes such as engineering design tasks, medical information storage and retrieval, the control of British Telecom's new automatic telephone exchanges, and scientific and industrial control applications.

High-level languages fall into two groups, interpreters and compilers. Some languages may be available in both forms. I have used the word compiler already and there is an important distinction between the two types of high-level languages.

The way in which an interpreter works is

6502 CPU

BY JOHN DAWSON

illustrated later in this article, in contrast, a compiler works through the source code and generates a complete set of machine-code instructions before the program is executed. The high-level source program can be erased from the computer memory before the program is run.

Compiled programs execute faster than interpreted ones because the computer does not have to keep referring to the high-level source code to discover which trick it is expected to perform next. Interpreted programs, on the other hand, are generally easier to correct and edit.

These sweeping generalisations overlook the fact that you could spend most of a three-year university course examining the nuances of various computer languages. Nevertheless, our definitions contain the kernel of the difference between interpreters and compilers.

Figure 1 is an outline illustration of the minimum elements necessary for a high-level interpreter. The following functions constitute the core of any interpreter:

- The programmer must be able to write a new set of instructions into the computer to create a source code for a particular application.
- The interpreter must have a facility for running the program, directing the computer into sequences of machine-code operations by sequentially examining one source code instruction after another.
- For anything but the most trivial work, an interpreter must be able to offer facilities for permanently storing a source code program on tape or disc. Having stored the program, it must be able to retrieve it and load the program from cassette tape or disc back into the computer.
- Most programs require editing either to correct faults or to extend the program's application, and a minimum set of commands for modifying the source code is set out in the edit command table of figure 1. The interpreter should be capable of Deleting or Inserting material in the source code program, of Appending new material to an existing program, of moving a cursor to different parts of the program so that one of the previous operations may be carried out. One further function is required — a command to Quit editing the stored program, returning control to the main command loop.

Figure 2 illustrates the operation of a high-level interpreter. Imagine that the oval path in the diagram is a race track. Each of the source code instructions, starting at the beginning of the program, is picked out of the computer memory and taken round the looped track like a baton carried by a runner.

If the instruction matches one of the instructions or reserved words in the machine's repertoire, a sequence of machine-code operations achieves the effect specified by the high-level instruction. Program control in the computer then returns to pick up the next source code instruction.

If there is no match between the instruction picked from memory and any one of the list of reserved words in the computer's interpreter, then point E has been reached and it is likely that an error message will be printed, typically:

SYNTAX ERROR

There are several subroutines which will be used time and again by different parts of any interpreter. Many of these subroutines move data into the machine from the user and display information in an orderly fashion on the VDU.

As far as possible, the subroutines I shall use in this series are relocatable — which means that the machine-code instructions can be typed in at any place in RAM. I shall also try to ensure that the subroutines leave the 6502 registers in the same state at the end as they were in at the beginning of the routine.

Building a program by writing modules which can be used anywhere without upsetting any adjacent operations will save hours of frustration when you are completing a major, multi-kilobyte exercise. This modular approach is just as valid in Basic as it is in machine code programming.

List 1 is a simple set of machine-code instructions for a Microtan to clear any information from the screen, leaving it filled with blank spaces.

The Microtan computer uses a memory-mapped VDU which is stored in RAM locations from 200 Hex to 3FF Hex. Two of the 6502 registers — the accumulator and index X — are used by the subroutine and these are saved on the stack by the instructions in line 500, 501, 502.

The accumulator is then loaded with the ASCII code for a space and register X with the value 00 Hex. The space code 20 Hex is stored at the memory location pointed to by adding X to 200 (507) and then to the location pointed to by 300 + X (50A).

The next instruction decrements X to FF Hex on the first time round the loop and then branches if X is not equal to zero to 507 (50E). The value of A, which is unchanged, is stored at the location pointed to by adding 200 to the new value of X — FF Hex — which equals 2FF Hex.

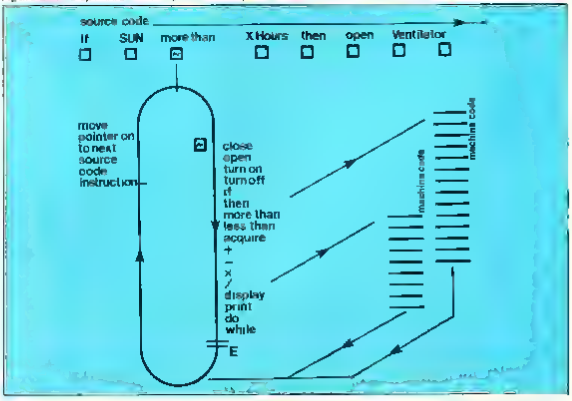
The process is continued until X equals zero when the branch instruction is not carried out and the program continues to restore the index register X and the accumulator to their original values in instructions 511 to 513. The RTS instruction in 514 directs the computer to return from the subroutine to the place in the main program from which it was called originally.

I have covered this tiny subroutine in detail because it performs a useful function in a larger program while being the simplest possible example of a repetitive operation involving a decision by the machine as to whether or not a condition is satisfied.

In figure 1 the top of the diagram illustrating the general structure of an interpreter

(continued on next page)

Figure 2. The operation of a high level interpreter



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shows the entry point to the command table labelled "Start". The first task an interpreter should perform is to clear the screen and then display a message to tell the user that control has been passed from the system monitor to the high level language and that the interpreter program is running.

After removing any previous information from the screen, the interpreter could then call up the subroutine set out in figure 3 which will display a message at the top of the Microtan screen.

A flowchart for the operations is set out next to the listing in figure 3. With the aid of the Microtan manual, you should be able to trace through the machine-code instructions, working out the purpose of each and its relationship to the whole.

The address of the line on the screen along which the cursor is located is stored in the zero-page locations 0A Hex and 0B Hex and the position of the cursor along that line is stored in zero-page location 03 Hex. The monitor subroutine at FE75 Hex loads a character into the next sequential position along the VDU line from the CPU register A.

The message to be displayed on the screen is stored in memory locations pointed to by locations 48 and 49 Hex plus the contents of index register Y. For example, the first message put on the screen is stored at 0F00 Hex and locations 48 and 49 contain 00 Hex and 0F Hex — remember that the low-order byte is stored first.

If Y contains 00 Hex when the subroutine is entered, that message will be displayed byte by byte until a null value — 00 Hex — is encountered. The second message in the program from which this is taken is stored at 0F20 Hex and Y must be loaded with 20 Hex before the SR is called.

List 2 is a subroutine to clear a section of memory from 1010 Hex to 2000 Hex. You can use it to set a part of the computer RAM to a known state before a new program or text is written into it.

List 3 is the start of a word-processing program called Asimov 1 am writing at present. Interpreters need editors, and there are marked similarities between word-processing programs and the more primitive text editors used to alter program lines and insert new instructions. You can tell that the program is still in an experimental phase from the untidy way in which reference values are loaded into zero-page locations.

However, two of the subroutines I have mentioned are called in the first few lines and the program continues to fetch a character from the Microtan keyboard, 0D33, and then seeks for a match between the character and a number of stored command letters. If a match is found, the program jumps to one of the functions set out in the command table of figure 1; if not, the program is re-started.

Finally, you may find the chart illustrated in figure 4 useful for keeping track of zero-page locations when developing your own special-purpose interpreter or any other low-level program. The best book I have found on 6502 assembler programming is the extraordinarily lucid, well written *6502 Software Design* by Leo Scanlon ■

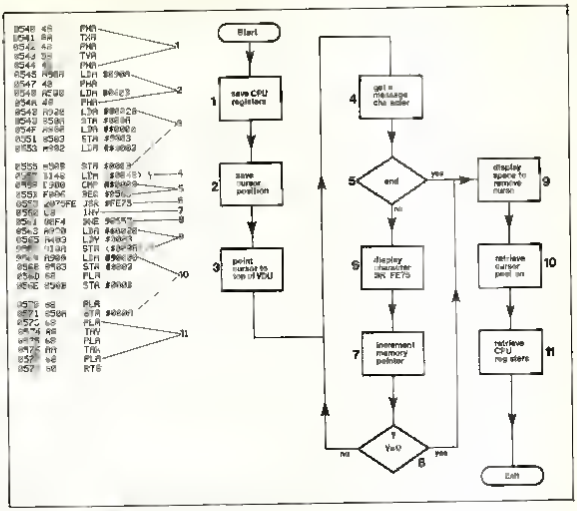
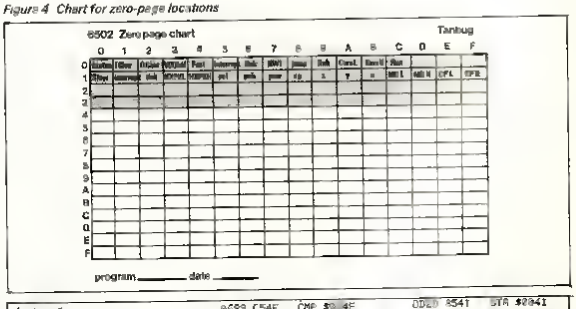


Figure 3 Subroutine to display a message on screen

Figure 4 Chart for zero-page locations



Listing 1

```
0502 48     PHA
0503 8A     TXA
0504 48     PHA
0505 A900   LDA #$00
0507 8522   STA $22
0509 A0F0   LDY #$F0
050B 8523   STA $23
050D DAFD   DEY
050E D0FD   BNE $050D
0510 EA     NOP
0511 68     PLA
0512 AA     TAX
0513 68     PLA
0514 60     RTS
```

Listing 2

```
0600 48     PHA
0601 8A     TXA
0602 48     PHA
0603 98     TYA
0604 48     PHA
0605 A910   LDA #$10
0607 854E   STA $04E
0609 A910   LDA #$10
060B 8540   STA $04F
060D A000   LDY #$00
060F 98     TYA
0610 914E   STA ($04E),Y
0612 C8     INY
0613 D0FB   BNE $0610
0615 E54F   INC $04F
0617 A520   LDA $20
0619 C54F   CMP $4F
061B D0F2   BNE $0F
061D 68     PLA
061E AA     TAY
061F 68     PLA
0620 AA     TAX
0621 68     PLA
0622 60     RTS
```

Listing 3

```
0D00
0D00 D8     CLD
0D01 A2FF   LDX #$00FF
0D03 9A     TXS
0D04 200825 JSR$5B0
0D07 A9AF   LDA #$00AF
0D09 8549   STA $0049
0D0B A900   LDA #$0000
0D0D 8548   STA $0048
0D0F A000   LDY #$0000
0D11 204005 JSR $5A0
0D14 A900   LDA #$0000
0D16 8548   STA $0048
0D18 8544   STA $0044
0D1A 8545   STA $0045
0D1C 8500   STA $0000
0D1E A910   LDA #$0010
0D20 8501   STA $0001
0D22 A020   LDY #$0020
0D24 8551   STA $0051
0D26 C8     INY
0D27 8552   STX $0052
0D29 A910   LDA #$0010
0D2B 8542   STA $0042
0D2D 8541   STA $0041
0D2F A9FE   LDA #$00FE
0D31 8543   STA $0043
0D33 20FDFD JSR $FDFD
0D36 A501   LDA $0001
0D38 C957   CMP #$0057
0D3A D003   BNE #$0DF
0D3C 4C9804 JMP $0498
0D3F C045   CMP #$0045
0D41 D003   BNE #$0F45
0D43 4CE804 JMP $04E0
0D46 C053   CMP #$0053
0D48 D00   BNE $0D41
0D4A 4C9D0  JMP $0D00
0D4D C45    CMP #$0052
0D4F D00    BNE $0D54
0D51 4C0D0  JMP $0D00
0D54 C95    CMP #$0058
0D56 D00    BNE $0D58
0D58 C95    CMP #$0055
0D5A D00    BNE $0D5D
0D5C 4C0D0  JMP $0D00
0D5F 4C0804 JMP $0408
0D62 C95    CMP #$0050
0D64 D00    BNE $0D67
0D66 4C0D0  JMP $0D00
0D69 A541   LDA $0041
0D6B A6E    LDX #$00E
0D6D 8543   STA $0043
0D6F 20FDFD JSR $FDFD
0D72 A501   LDA $0001
0D74 C957   CMP #$0057
0D76 D003   BNE #$0DE
0D78 4C9804 JMP $0498
0D7B C045   CMP #$0045
0D7D D003   BNE #$0F45
0D7F 4CE804 JMP $04E0
0D82 C053   CMP #$0053
0D84 D00    BNE $0D41
0D86 4C9D0  JMP $0D00
0D89 C54F   CMP $4F
0D8B D0F2   BNE $0F
0D8D 68     PLA
0D8E AA     TAY
0D8F 68     PLA
0D90 AA     TAX
0D91 68     PLA
0D92 60     RTS
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ZX-81 machine code

Programs in machine code run faster than equivalent Basic programs and need less storage space. Brendan Clancy explains how you can store machine code from your ZX 81 and describes an entertaining game

THERE ARE various ways of storing machine code programs on the ZX 81. One method is to lower the address held in RAM Top and Poke the machine code into the area above this address. Alternatively, you can use an array, or store the machine code in a Rem statement.

The last method is the most useful, since machine code in an array is likely to change its position in memory and can be destroyed by pressing Run. Machine code held above the address stored in RAM Top cannot be Saved.

The only major problem with storing machine code in a Rem statement is that Listing the program can sometimes cause the machine to crash, but this problem can easily be overcome.

The program shown in listing 1 provides a useful means of entering machine code into a Rem statement. The program has been written to fit on the unexpanded ZX 81, but it can, of course, be used with the 16K RAM fitted. The only constraint is that the program must be less than 251 bytes, but this is a reasonable length for a machine code program. The program also has facilities for editing the machine code.

To enter the machine code loading program, first type in line 1 as a Rem statement containing 250 Qs. This should produce seven full lines of Qs plus the first line. Next, enter

PRINT PEEK 16511

as a direct command to give the length of the line. This should equal 252, if it does not, edit the line and add or delete Qs as required.

Line 1 will ultimately be used to hold the machine code program. It is best to enter line 1 in the Fast mode since in Slow, the computer takes a while to re-write the line when the final Qs are being entered.

After entering line 1, it is best to enter lines 10 to 90 since after line 5 has been entered, lines 10 and upwards will have to be listed separately because line 5 contains a Newline character. After entering line 90 and checking that everything is correct, type in line 5.

The commas are only to help distinguish between keywords and other letters, and the line should not contain any commas or spaces apart from the spaces put in automatically around the keywords. To enter a keyword in the Rem statement, type

THEN

followed by the key with the required keyword. Then go back one, delete the Then and move the cursor to the right hand side of the keyword.

After entering line five, Poke the following values as direct commands:

```
POKE 16771 , 123
POKE 16772 , 169
POKE 16773 , 118
POKE 16775 , 128
POKE 16787 , 157
POKE 16789 , 82
POKE 16791 , 127
POKE 16795 , 195
POKE 16796 , 3
POKE 16797 , 4
```

After entering the program, press Run followed by Newline. The string input prompt should appear in the corner of the screen. To enter a machine-code program, enter each byte separately in decimal form. It is useful to remember that negative numbers will be converted into twos-complement form automatically when Poked. For example, —5 becomes 251. The program checks for numbers greater than 255 and asks for the byte to be re-input.

As well as Poking the machine code into the Rem statement, the program also performs certain other functions. If you enter an incorrect value by mistake, input "J" instead of a number. The next number entered will then replace the erroneous value.

Pressing "L" followed by Newline will produce the prompt for a numerical input. If you then enter the value of an address in your machine code program, the computer will list the program from that point, giving the addresses in the left hand column and the values in decimal of the corresponding bytes in the right hand one. To stop the listing, press Break.

After listing the machine-code program in this way, it is not possible to continue entering machine code from the point at which you stopped, since — due to restrictions on the amount of memory available — the same variable is used to hold the address when listing and inputting data. To return to the address at which you stopped or to change the current address for any other reason, stop the program using Break and then enter

LET A = (new address)

as a direct command, and then enter

GOTO 15

followed by Newline. You can then continue to enter the machine code from the address of the value you gave to A.

A problem often found when using a Rem statement to hold machine code is how many bytes to reserve in it. Making the statement too long is wasteful of memory since it can be difficult to edit long lines of machine code to remove the excess bytes, and making it too short will obviously lead to running out of memory.

The last function offered by the loading program provides a solution to the problem, and also to the problem of how to dispense with the loading program once the machine code has been loaded.

Typing Del followed by Newline in response to the input prompt will destroy the loading program and also search to find where the machine code ends in line 1. It then removes all the excess Qs, leaving only line 1 as a Rem statement containing your machine code.

Removing Qs will, of course, alter the length of the line, so the value for the new length of the line is then loaded into location 16511. Finally a Newline character is placed at the end of the line.

All of this is achieved by the machine-code program held in line two, which is listed here. If you Run the loading program, enter "L" and then input 16770 as the address, the computer should list the values given on the right hand side of the listing.

```
LD HL , 16765      33 , 123 , 65
LD A , 54          62 , 54
CPD                237 , 169
JP Z 250           40 , 250
INC HL             35
INC HL             35
```

(continued on next page)

Listing 1. Program to enter machine code into a Rem statement.

```
1          SEE TEXT
2  REM 5 , %   INKEY$ , Y , R , GOSUB , A , C , IF , T , 7 , 0
   X , FAST , Y , X , PND , , GO-UB , X , 6 , , RND , LPRINT
   T , X , ,

10  LET A = 16514
15  INPUT A$
20  IF A$ = "DEL" THEN PRINT USR 16770
25  IF A$ = "L" THEN GOTO 55
30  IF A$ = "J" THEN LET A = A - 1
35  IF A$ = "J" THEN GOTO 15
40  IF VAL A$ > 255 THEN GOTO 15
45  POKE A , VAL A$
50  GOTO 70
55  PRINT "HDIREGCP"
60  INPUT A
65  CLS
70  PRINT AT 16 , 0 , A , "=" , PEEK A
75  LET A = A + 1
80  SCROLL
85  IF A$ = "L" THEN GOTO 70
90  GOTO 15
```

(continued from previous page)

```
LD ( HL> 118   54   116
PUSH HL          229
LD DE , 16512    17 , 128   64
FOF HL           225
INC HL           35
JP 1027          195 , 3   4
```

The reason why machine-code programs in Rem statements can often cause the computer to crash is that there is not enough memory to display the complete line on the screen, and so the computer becomes caught in a never-ending loop as it keeps trying to re write the line

This is shown by the fact that machine-code programs which cause the unexpanded ZX 81 to crash will list easily with the 16K pack fitted

If two consecutive Newline characters are Poked into the first two bytes after the Rem in the Rem statement containing the machine code, they will have no effect when the program is run but will prevent the rest of the Rem statement from being listed This will stop the computer from crashing if the program is listed

The rest of the program cannot now be listed simply by pressing List but will have to be listed separately — that is, you will have to enter

LIST 2

to list the program if line 1 contains the machine code

If the machine code is in line 1, it can now be called by

USR 16516

instead of

USR 16514

although it does not make much difference as Halt commands have little effect on the speed.

It is best to Save the loading program along with the machine-code program before deleting the rest of the program so that if the machine-code program does not work, it can be loaded again and edited using the loading program

Listing 2 is for a machine code game A plane flies over a randomly-generated skyline and its up-and down movement is controlled by the up and down cursor keys The object is to destroy as many buildings as possible to clear a space in which to land without crashing through more than three blocks

Bombs can be dropped by pressing the 0 key and each bomb destroys up to four blocks in each building Moving the plane up to avoid hitting the buildings uses up one of the original 15 units of fuel When the plane runs out of fuel, it continues to fall The plane descends one space automatically at the end of each line

It is worth remembering when writing your own machine code programs that you can take advantage of the unused system variables by storing in them the variables required in the machine-code program As an example in this program locations 16507 and 16508 are used for holding the position of the plane Some of the system variables used can be utilised as long as they are not needed for the Basic program, e g , Coords and Seed The first 32 bytes of the printer buffer, 16444 16475, can also be used as long as there is no return to Basic until the end of the machine-code program

To enter the program, first load the machine-code loading program given in listing 1 Press Run followed by Newline and then enter the values given on the right hand side of the listing byte by byte At intervals, an address is given on the left of the listing

If at this point you are not entering the value on the left hand side of the column, type 'L' followed by Newline and then enter the value of the last address given When you reach the point at which you went wrong stop the listing with Break and enter

LET A = (address where program goes wrong)

followed by Goto 15 as direct commands Then continue to enter the program from the point at which it went wrong

When you have entered all the numbers and listed the program from the beginning to make sure that everything is correct, run the machine-code loader and type

DEL

followed by Newline This will leave you with a Rem statement containing the machine code

Then enter the Basic program at the end of listing 2 exactly as it is written, lower case has been used to denote inverse characters Next enter

PRINT PEEK 16396 + 256 × PEEK 16397

as a direct command This should give 16922, otherwise you have made a mistake

If so if PRINT PEEK 16511

followed by Newline gives 251, then the fault is in the Basic part of the program — otherwise a mistake has been made when entering the machine code.

If you want to give yourself more fuel, the amount which is given at the beginning is held in location 16571. The number of blocks you are allowed to crash through is held in location 16663, and the speed of the game can be changed by Poking address 16752 with a different value ■

Listing 2 Program for aircraft landing machine-code game

```
16514  HALT                 118
       HALT                 118
       LD BC  23            1*  30   n     set up time w
       LD L  JE             14  30
       LD A  "RANDOM"       59  5c   w4    random number
       LD I (16317   A      58  1fd  w4
       LD HL  7FFFh         33  ff   67
       ADD HL,              41
       PUSH HL              229
       LD HL  ( 16377       42  129  64
       INC  HL              35
       LD A  ( HRGHT )      58  D    6
       POP HL               225
       AND                  230
       LD B,  A             71
       INC  B               4
       PUSH HL              229
       LD  A  ( b           58  8
       SUB HL  BC           209  2
       STACCMD              1F  256
       POP HL               225
       INC  HL              35
       DEC C                13
       JR NZ  L31           32  D31  6
       LD HL  16429         2a  1D  85
       LD  16367  HL        24  1D  w4    reset plane position
       LD HL  16438         33  56  64
       LD I  ( 8            3a  8   7
       LD HL  (6417         2a  57  64    reset fuel
       LD  HL  15           36  15  b     reset fuel
16572  LD BC  33            1*  21  n     erase last position
       XOR A                175                of plane
       LD  HL  A            119
       INC HL               23
       LD  HL )  A          119
       INC HL               43
       LD  HL )  A          119
       INC HL               35
       HL HL                29
16580  LD A  ( 16447        3a  30  64    out of fuel?
       CP  0                254 0
       JP Z 30              ca  29
       LD A  LAST K         3a  76  w4
       CP  39               254 39
       JP NZ 34             c2  18
       INC HL  BC           23  62        move plane up
       PUSH HL              229
       LD BC  ( 2 FILE      ed  7b  13    64
       ENC HL  BC           23  62
       POP HL               225
       JP L 18              c3  1b
       PUSH HL              229
       LD HL  ( 16437 )     2a  75  64
       DEC  HL              33
       POP HL               225
       CP  2,3              254 223       down key pressed?
       JR NZ 1              20  1
       DEC HL               33            move plane down
       PUSH HL              229
       LD BC  16429         ed  4b  2d    check to see
       ADC HL  BC           237 4a        if a bomb had
       POP HL               225           arrived
       RET NC               d0
       INC HL               35            move a bomb forward
       PUSH HL              229
       LD A  ( HL )         126
       CP  118              254 118       check for end
       JR Z 34              28  14        of line
       CP  0                254 0         check for hit
       JR Z 19              28  13        on tower
       DEC HL               43
16663  LD A  HL )           126
       CP  0                254 0
       JR Z 8               28  4
       DEC HL               43
       LD A  ( HL )         126
       CP  0                254 0
       JR Z 4
```

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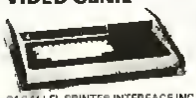

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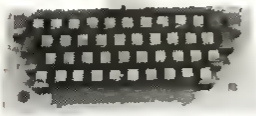

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FINGERTIPS

Fingertips is our regular calculator column covering calculator news, programming hints and examples of unusual applications. The column is written and compiled by calculator enthusiast David Pringle who is glad to hear of any of your ideas. *Your Computer* pays £6 for each of your contributions published.

How does a calculator generate all those standard functions, such as square roots and sines, which we all take very much for granted? A look-up table similar to the antediluvian log book would require vast data storage on a scale hardly compatible with the size of the universe, never mind a pocket.

As I hinted last month, the calculator is micro-programmed with algorithms which generate these functions from simple operations such as addition, subtraction and register shifting — see Jargon. The algorithms are chosen for their concisness, accuracy and speed in handling the binary-coded decimal (BCD) arithmetic.

There is, of course, no definitive solution and so it is not surprising to find different algorithms implemented on different machines. For instance, look at the maximum angle for which trigonometric functions are evaluated on the following calculator:

CASIO 602P $\theta < 1440°$
TI 58C $\theta < 3.6 \times 10^{14}$
HP41-C $\theta < 10^{100}$

I would like to show you one in-depth example of how the Hewlett-Packard evaluates its trigonometric functions. For program compactness, the tangent function, $\tan\theta$, is always generated first and if required $\sin\theta$ or $\cos\theta$ are subsequently derived using the formulae

$$\sin\theta = \frac{\pm\tan\theta}{\sqrt{1+\tan^2\theta}}$$

$$\cos\theta = \frac{\pm\cot\theta}{\sqrt{1+\cot^2\theta}}$$

Where

$$\cot\theta = \frac{1}{\tan\theta}$$

Note how the form of the two equations is identical and so obviates the need for separate subroutines. All calculations are performed in radians, requiring angles input in degrees to be multiplied by $\pi/180$. The first problem is to scale angles so that they lie in the first four quadrants — 0 to 2π radians.

This is performed for positive angles by subtracting multiples of 2π radians until the next operation gives a negative result. Remember that

$$\sin(\theta - 2\pi) = \sin(\theta)$$

Such a method will lead to rounding errors for large angles because the value of θ is only stored internally to 12 decimal places. For instance $\sin 10^{80}$ should be exactly equal to 0. Is this true for your calculator?

The heart of the technique lies in dividing the required angle into easily handled portions. Consider the angle θ_3 as represented by the vector with co-ordinates (X, Y) in figure 1.

This may be formed by two successive rotations of the vector through angles

θ_1 and θ_2

if

$\theta_1 + \theta_2 = \theta_3$

See figure 2.

We can relate the final and intermediate co-ordinates by the form

$$X = X_1 \cos\theta_2 - Y_1 \sin\theta_2 \qquad -(1)$$

$$Y = Y_1 \cos\theta_2 + Y_1 \sin\theta_2$$

It follows that

$$\frac{Y}{X} = \tan(\theta_1 + \theta_2) = \tan\theta_3 = \frac{Y_1 + X_1 \tan\theta_2}{X_1 - Y_1 \tan\theta_2} \qquad -(2)$$

Simply by recognising that it is possible to extend this argument and build a large angle from numerous smaller ones, we see that a tangent may be expressed as a product involving the tangents of the composite angles.

The sleight of hand involves using composite angles whose tangents are simple powers of 10. Any angle may be expressed in a register of four bit digits in the form

$\theta = A\,B\,C\,D \ldots$

where

$\theta = A \tan^{-1}(1) + B \tan^{-1}(0.1) + C \tan^{-1}(0.01) + \ldots + r$

$\tan^{-1}(1) = 45°$

$\tan^{-1}(0.1) = 5.7106°$

r = remainder

For instance 73.42° would be stored as 1497. Thus to generate X and Y by repeatedly applying the second equation, we need only add, subtract or register shift given the initial values X_1 and Y_1.

So, the Hewlett-Packard algorithm starts by dividing the required angle into a sum of smaller angles whose values are stored on ROM. All that is then needed is the initial seed X_1 and Y_1 of the second equation. The remainder r will be a small angle for which $\tan\theta = \theta$ is a good approximation — this is why we use radians.

Thus, to good accuracy, the initial Y_1 can be set to the residual angle and the initial X_1 set to 1.

The second equation is then repeatedly applied to generate a final X and Y co-ordinate. If $\tan\theta$ is required, the quotient Y/X is calculated and displayed. $\sin\theta$ and $\cos\theta$ follow simply from the routines mentioned earlier. If you think you have a better way, I am sure Hewlett-Packard would love to hear from you.

All linguists will be glad to know that I had to swallow my Poisson evaluation challenge hook, line and sinker. As you may remember this entailed evaluating the sum

$$\sum_{X=0}^{110} \frac{(229)^X e^{-229}}{X!}$$

in less than 22 seconds.

No Hewlett Packard or Texas Instruments owner was game enough to write to *Your Computer* but I had not banked on Casio releasing a new calculator in an attempt to disrupt the competition. The previously published program will run on the Casio 602 P in considerably less than 20 seconds. To add insult to injury, Londener John Matzak, wrote the following piece which requires a mere 5.5 seconds.

```
01  110      09  MR 01
02  Min 00   10  +
03  229      11  MR 00
04  Min 01   12  =
05  Ln       13  Min 02
06  x        14  MR 00
07  MR 00    15  x
08  -        16  2
17  x        37  Ln
18  Y^x      38  M- 02
19  =        39  MR 02
20  √        40  e^x
21  Ln       41  Min 02
22  M- 02    42  Min F
23  MR 00    43  LBL 0
24  Ln       44  X→M02
25  x        45  x
26  MR 00    46  MR 00
27  =        47  DSZ
28  M- 02    48  ÷
29  1        49  MP 01
30  +        50  =
31  1        51  M+ 02
32  ÷        52  X→M02
33  12       53  x=F
34  ÷        54  HLT
35  MR 00    55  Min F
36  =        56  GOTO 0
```

Remember that one problem in deriving the algorithm was in handling products greater than 691. Ray Wilkes of Shipley has written to *Your Computer* showing an interesting way of generating factorials whose values lie well in excess of 10^{100}.

Recall that

$$X! = X(X-1)(X-2) \ldots 1$$

and so

$$\log X! = \sum_{n=1}^{X} \log n$$

Ray Wilkes' program evaluates $\log X!$, which is much smaller than $X!$, through this summation. The value of $X!$ is then

(Fractional Part of Log X!) × 10

(Integral Part Log X!)

Why? well

$\log(A \times 10^B) = B + \log A$

The number of ways of selecting R objects from a set of N objects is denoted by P(R) and equals N!/(N−R)! permutations.

If there is no regard for the

(continued on next page)

Figure 1

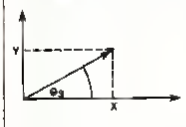
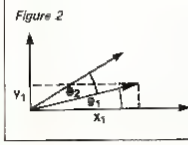


Figure 2



JARGON

■ Register shifting
Remember that a register is a segment of memory which in a calculator normally contains seven or eight bytes of binary information. A shift register is one in which bits are synchronously shifted *en masse* through a series of memory cells under the command of a common signal. If, for instance your machine is asked to add 28.24 and 57.3, the first operation it must perform is to shift each digit of the larger number, including the decimal point, one place to the left. The shifted number is then 57.30. The decimal places now line up and so addition may take place. The shifting in the case of the trigonometric evaluation is slightly different. Here we want to move each digit except the decimal point by X positions to the left or right. This corresponds to multiplication by 10^X for leftward movements and 10^{-X} for rightward.

■ Digit
By Digit I mean group of bits corresponding to one decimal digit or number between 0 and 9.

■ Concatenation
Usually applied to describe the linking together of two or more character expressions.

(continued from previous page)

ordering of the R objects, we have a combination $C(^{n}_{2})$ equalling

$$N(N-1)/2$$

```
01  R/S
02  STO 5
03  SBR 3
04  STO 1
05  STO 2
06  R/S
07  INV SUM 5
08  SBR 3
09  INV SUM 1
10  RCL 5
11  SBR 3
12  INV SUM 1
13  INV SUM 2
14  R/S
15  2nd LBL 1
16  RCL 1
17  GTO 6
18  2nd LBL 2
19  RCL 2
20  GTO 6
21  2nd LBL 0
22  2nd INV ot
23  RST
24  2nd LBL 3
25  2nd x=t
26  GTO 5
27  STO 0
28  2nd LBL 4
29  RCL 0
30  2nd LOG X
31  +
32  2nd DSZ
33  GTO 4
34  0
35  =
36  INV SBR
37  2nd LBL 5
38  0
39  INV SBR
40  2nd LBL 6
41  R/S
42  2nd INV INT
43  2nd INV LOGX
44  R/S
```

To clear and re-set registers SBR 0

Enter n R/S Enter r R/S

For $C(^{n}_{r})$ press SBR 1

For $P(^{n}_{r})$ press SBR 2

For n only press SBR 3 then SBR 0

To calculate 1000

Enter 1000 SBR 3 SBR 6

2567 6046 displayed

Note 2567 Press R/S

4.02355 displayed

Therefore $1000 = 4.02355 \times 10^{2567}$

I briefly mentioned earlier that Casio have brought out a new calculator, the 602 F

At first sight the Casio 602 P looks identical to one of the 500 series machines, but the 602 P can hold a maximum of 512 lines of program — twice that of its cousin, the 502 P

A new and most welcome innovation, in keeping with other top-range calculators, has been to introduce a user defined data and program memory partition

The input capacity ranges from 32 program steps and 88 data memories to 512 steps and 22 memories. Each memory will cost you eight program steps. Instructions involving any but the first 22 memories, e.g. MR 45, now occupy two program lines instead of one. This also applies to the only new numeric function INV RND PIX which will round a number to a specified value of decimal places. It will have no effect on numbers like $10\ 327 \times 10^{10}$

Incidentally, Casio has omitted the old NOP dummy function which I never used anyway. What really differentiates this calculator from its predecessors is its alpha numeric ability. Although this lends nothing to the computing power of the machine, it greatly increases its utility

No longer those dreary attempts to decipher the meaning of program line FF-05. Not only can you see your present line in its full glory, but the preceding line or lines if they will fit into the additional free display space. This makes program editing and writing a pleasure

Extra display characters as well as the choice of upper and lower case almost let the user become grammatical. To sustain these characters Casio has produced a rectangular, dot-matrix liquid crystal display which I found disarming at first but have grown to like

There is no separate alpha numeric display register. The X register doubles up for both numeric and character display with an Alpha annunciator present when Alpha mode is accessed by

INV ' ALPHA

There is, however, a register which stores the last alpha-numeric display before returning to Normal or numeric mode. This may be accessed on the next return to Alpha mode by the command

(INV ')

and may be concatenated with this character expression

It is possible, if wished, to give any program a four-character password which must be entered before that program can be accessed. I really cannot see why Casio has done this especially as forgetting the password means scrapping the program. I carry no state secrets on my calculator

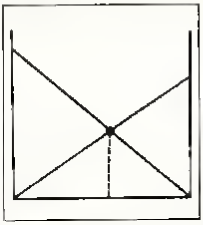
The handbook and program listings are, as usual, very useful. I especially recommend the extended pictorial information on subroutines and looping. Occasionally, though, the abysmal standard of English obscures the meaning of sentences. For instance

All characters between these two signs, [illegible] and [illegible], will be alphabetical comments regardless of any numerals or calculating signs, even there merely remaining displayed as they are, and nothing being affecting the calculation

Not a very good advert for Casio's English-Japanese translating machine

Minor quibbles aside, the 602 P and its half-capacity brother, the 601 P, represent a great addition to the calculator inventory. I hear through the grapevine that Casio will be launching yet another range soon. The FX-702P, already available in the U.S., is a Basic programmable machine and will provide the first challenge to the Sharp PC 1211. Its memory will hold 1,600 program steps while storing 26 Basic variables. Built-in interfaces for a printer, tape recorder and pre programmed ROM will eventually make it a powerful system

To make up for the lack of a competition in last month's issue, here is a brain teaser posed by D J Dennes of Troon. Consider two ladders resting against opposite perpendicular walls as shown below. The large ladder is



30ft tall, the small, 20ft. Their point of intersection is 10ft above the ground. The neatest program to evaluate the distance between the walls to four decimal places will win £5. You may well find it not as easy as it looks

Now let us turn to readers' programs. First, something for the 602 P. The following program allows the user to add numbers without using the + key or a program Execute command

```
LBL
MR F
LBL I
INV PAUSE
INV X=F
GOTO I
M+F
GOTO 0
```

Actually, this will run on any of the 500/600 series machine and presumably any other with a Pause command. It was from Leon Goodfriend of Cardiff who also gives a biorythm calculation

After requesting your age in days the calculator displays your biorythms in the order physical, emotional and intellectual. A special feature is the trend indicator + sign after your biorythm — which is calculated on the sale +1 best and −1 worst — indicates that you are moving upwards in the cycle while a − sign indicates that you are on a downward trend

```
01 MODE 4          19 MIN 01
02 "               20 LBL 1
03 A               21 MR00
04 G               22 ÷
05 E               23 MR 01
06 INV SPACE       24 =
07 −               25 INV FRAC
08 INV SPACE       26 MIN 02
09 d               27 MIN 03
10 a               28 MR00
11 y               29 INV 1/X
12 s               30 M+ 03
13 ?               31 3
14 "               32 6
15 HLT             33 0
16 MIN 00          34 X
17 2               35 X
18 3               36 MR 03
37 =               51 INV
38 SIN             52 ÷
39 MIN F           53 '
40 MR 02           54 GOTO 3
41 =               55 LBL 2
42 SIN             56 "
43 INV RND         57 INV
44 FIX 2           58 ÷
45 =               59 "
46 #               60 LBL 3
47 '               61 HLT
48 INV XOF         62 5
49 GOTO 2          63 M+ 01
50 "               64 GOTO 1
```

Bernard Deuchfield has a flight simulator program for his Sinclair Cambridge Programmable

The program is based on a Boeing 737 aircraft making an instrument landing system approach on a 3° glide-path

The aircraft starts at a range of 10 nautical miles from the threshold of the runway. The height, between 2,000 and 4,000ft, and speed, between 160 and 210 knots, are selected at the beginning of the game by the player. The object of the game is to secure a safe landing by crossing the threshold at a height of 0-100ft and a speed between 120 and 140 knots

This is achieved by selecting your descent rate, in each stage and also the thrust-setting value and the distance you wish to travel under those conditions. If at any time during the game the aircraft's speed drops below 100 knots the aircraft has stalled and crashed. Similarly, if a negative height is achieved the aircraft has also crashed

```
18 stop        00 x
19 )           01 stop
20 sto         02 +
21 =           03 #
22 +           04 5
23 stop        05 2
24 =           06 −
25 stop        07 #
26 −           08 3
27 (           09 0
28 stop        10 ×
29 x           11 (
30 rcl         12 stop
31 )           13 )
32 ▼           14 #
33 goto        15 6
34 0           16 0
35 0           17 +
```

Descent rate between 50 and 2000 ft/min

Thrust setting value

1 idle

2 10,000rpm

20 13,000rpm

40 50,000rpm (max)

or any other value between 1 and 40 may be used

Distance 1 or nautical miles at a time is recommended

To execute enter descent rate, run, enter thrust setting value, run, enter distance, run, enter present speed, run, enter present speed again and run. New speed will be displayed. Then enter present height, run, enter descent rate again, run and then new height will be displayed. Finaly enter, ▲▼▲▼ goto 00 and C/CE ■

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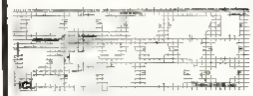

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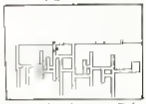

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STEPPING UP

■ As an old newcomer to computing — I am over 70 — I must congratulate you on your magazine, the neat issue is eagerly awaited I want to progress from my ZX-80, but am puzzled about the choices. My maximum outlay will be £300 and I shall have to sell my ZX-80 to make that possible Yet what do I buy? I'm interested in colour for the grandchildren but will want to use it for more personal computing uses Another aspect will be weight and portability — from cupboard to table — as we have no provision for permanent location Therefore, I'm not too happy about the so-called add-on features Having no experience with more powerful computers I don't know how to assess their merits, and at my age, the next computer is likely to be my last

A Inmann,
Sale, Cheshire

THERE ARE as you say, a number of computers on the market, and the choice can be a little bewildering We think the choice can be reduced to four in your case The Vic which offers colour and sound for around £200 but needs a special £50 cassette player and uses Pet Basic the Tandy Colour Computer which offers colour and sound, and uses cassettes for saving programs is ideal as the next step up from the ZX-80 as it uses almost standard ZX-80 Basic — apart from the sound and colour commands, the Texas TI-99/4 has colour, sound good software support, but it is rather slow and limited without the extra plug-in extended Basic the BBC Proton will have the added advantage of a vast library of software, articles, books and the like — plus the TV programme Delivery times on the Tandy and the BBC machine are a little uncertain, so we think it is a choice between the Vic or the Texas Of these, the Vic is a much younger computer than the Texas which in some respects, is like a glorified games machine but the Texas has — at present — better software support.

GAMES CHOICE

■ I am registered blind but have sufficient vision to read at close range a domestic TV, preferably white print on coloured background I want a home computer best suited for intellectual and hobby use Top priorities are in the following order very good games potential, comprehensive software, exceptional graphics, good facilities for learning programming from beginners' to advanced level I would require sufficient memory to cope with these facilities. I think a domestic TV as VDU would be best suited to me if clarity does not suffer

F A Norton,
Rushden, Glogd

WE HAVE MET three people with limited vision who find the ZX 81 very useful, especially if a large screen domestic television is used for the display However the Vic has an even larger display, as well as having much more flexible graphics including colour and a memory mapper screen, so this may be more suitable The Tandy Colour Computer which will be available later this year, has large clear letters on its display Obviously the money you have to spend will dictate to some extent the computer you buy The ZX 81 is around £70, the Vic around £200 and the Tandy Colour Computer will be more than £300 However, the Vic and Tandy are more flexible than the ZX-81

ZX-81 COMMAND

■ Would it be possible for you to tell me what the ZX-80 'TL$' would be on the ZX-81? I have spent hours trying to discover it I am also very interested in graphics. Is it possible to obtain high resolution graphics on the ZX-81?

Andrew Hum,
Bury, Lancashire

THE EQUIVALENT function to TL$ on the ZX-81 is

(2 TO)

This is how you use it On the ZX 80 you say

LET A$ = TL$ (A$)

While the ZX 81 equivalent is

LET A$ = A$ (2 TO)

SINCLAIR PRINTER

■ How is the ZX printer connected to the ZX 81 if you have a 16K RAM pack connected to the back of the computer? Is the ZX printer connected to the back of the 16k or to the inside of the computer? Also, what kind of paper does the ZX printer use? Is it normal or a special expensive kind only available from Sinclair?

Antony Upward,
Kings Heath Birmingham

THE ZX PRINTER is connected by a short lead to a unit which plugs directly into the ZX-81 leaving a further connector strip at the back for attaching the 16K pack The one we have seen flops about alarmingly but we believe this will be improved on the units put on sale The printer needs a special metallic paper but it will be available from other sources as well as Sinclair Research

O.K FOR MATHS?

■ I read your review of the Vic-20 with interest since I am considering buying my first computer I am beginning to feel that since three-quarters of home computer users are interested in their machines only as toys, that games-related facilities are accordingly heavily weighted in reviews Am I right, or is it fairer to say that the more serious mathematically related facilities are common to all micros? I ask this question since the Vic 20 is obviously generating plenty of interest and favourable comment, yet it seems to me that, to someone who is not interested in playing games and who does not require external storage, the Sinclair ZX-81 with 16K RAM at £120 is far better value for money than the Commodore machine, or indeed any other

N J Ford,
Newmarket

FIRSTLY ALTHOUGH people buy computers for a wide variety of reasons, nearly all find they spend some time playing with them It is fun and the least painful way to learn programming and to become familiar with your computer So do not look down on game playing until you have tried it Secondly, reviews often highlight game features because these are precisely the same features which you'll use for serious mathematical work If you really do not want external storage — that is if you are happy to enter the program every time you want to run it — then for many mathematical tasks, you will not even need the 16K pack on the ZX 81 The things to look for are floating point arithmetic, highest and lowest acceptable arithmetic values, how many decimal points accuracy, and functions available direct from the keyboard such as sin, cos, square root and the like You can find these from reading the manufacturer's literature, and you can be reasonably safe in assuming that if they are listed they will work accurately and quickly As a final thought, you may find a programmable calculator is more suitable for your task than a small computer

MUSIC PROGRAM

■ I would like to congratulate you on the first two issues of your magazine As a recent owner of the ZX 81, I find the majority of the articles interesting and easy to read I have spent some time trying with little success, to convert Robin Arlott's complete music program, August/September issue, to run on my ZX-81. The program ceases the machine as soon as the USR routine is entered on line 110 Could you help?

D J Lamb,
Bracknell, Berkshire

A COMPLETE routine to enable you to play your ZX 81 like an organ is given in the book *Mastering machine code on your ZX-81 or ZX 80* by Tony Baker, and the revised *ZX 80 magic book* with ZX 81 supplement also gives a way of producing music from your ZX 81 It is not particularly simple Another way of getting the first steps towards music on the ZX-81 is suggested by L D Tender of Waddon Croydon a member of the National ZX 80 and ZX 81 Users' Club is as follows you need to put a transistor radio near your computer to hear the music You may be able to hear it through your TV speaker if you turn up the volume It may be necessary to tune the TV slightly off the best picture position to obtain the best sound This routine is reprinted from the book *50 zip running games for the ZX 80 and ZX 81*

```
1  LET K = 100
2  FOR C = 1 TO 2
3  FOR A = 1 TO K
4  GOSUB 30
5  NEXT A
6  FOR A = 1 TO K
7  GOSUB 30
8  NEXT A
9  FOR A = 1 TO K
10 LET J = J + 1
11 GOSUB 30
12 NEXT A
13 PAUSE 5
14 FOR S = 1 TO 3
15 FOR A = 1 TO 17
16 GOSUB 30
17 NEXT A
18 NEXT S
19 NEXT G
20 PAUSE 5
21 FOR A = 1 TO 50
22 GOSUB 30
23 NEXT A
24 FOR A = 1 TO K
25 GOSUB 30
26 LET J = J + 1
27 NEXT A
28 PAUSE 10
29 RUN
30 SLOW
31 FAST
32 LET J = 0
33 RETURN
```

SCREEN LINK-UP

■ What is the difference between a monitor and a VDU and can I connect my ZX 81 directly to either?

A Burge
London, NW3

VDU STANDS for visual display unit and is a generic term for any cathode ray tube used as an output device A monitor is, in effect a TV without a unit to tune in stations It produces a superior display from computers compared to a normal television You need a small circuit to connect your ZX 81 to a monitor A suitable circuit is described in Timedata's book *The ZX-80 magic book*, now available with a ZX 81 supplement ■

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Remember re-number

James Tyler,
Portsmouth

ZX-81

THIS PROGRAM is a modification of the re-number routine by Ian Craig, which was published on page 37 of the August/September issue of *Your Computer*.

The old version of the re-number had a few shortcomings. When executed, it would cause the system to crash irrevocably if line 9999 was not present in the listing, or if there was no listing.

This new program does not have these disadvantages. It is virtually crashproof and once loaded is unaffected by New.

Before entering the following Basic program, type in:

```
POKE 16388, 222
POKE 16389, 67
```

On a 1K ZX 81 this saves 34 bytes above RAM-Top — 17374 to 17407. This is where we will store the machine code routine. If you have a 16K RAM pack, different values must be entered. So, type:

```
POKE 16388, 222
POKE 16389, 127
```

This means that the routine will then be stored in addresses 32734 to 32767. See page 168 in the ZX 81 manual for details. As soon as you have Poked these two values, type New.

Now that we have reserved our memory area, we can start to enter the program. You must remember to perform the last procedure before loading the re-number from tape.

```
10 DIM M (34)
20 FOR B = 1 TO 34
30 INPUT M(B)
40 PRINT AT 6,4 "[3 SPACES]"
50 PRINT AT 6,4 ;M(B)
60 NEXT B
```

Enter and run the program, and then type the following decimal numbers from left to right:

33, 125, 64, 17, 10, 0, 126, 254, 118, 32, 6, 35, 126, 254, 118, 200, 43, 114, 35, 115, 6, 10, 10, 16, 253, 35, 126, 254, 118, 32, 250, 35, 24, 228

When all 34 values have been entered, return to the listing and erase the line numbers, but do not use New or any command likely to clear the variables, such as Run or Clear. Now enter:

```
10 REM "RE NO"
20 FOR B = 17374 TO 17407
30 POKE B, M(B-17373)
40 NEXT B
50 PRINT AT 1,5; "ZX-81 RE NUMBER"
60 PRINT AT 3,6; "CALL AT USR 17374"
70 PAUSE 200
80 NEW
90 SAVE "RE NO"
100 GOTO 20
```

Remember to change addresses at lines 20 and 30 appropriately if you have more than 1K of memory. Now start your recorder recording and type:

```
GOTO 90
```

This saves the program together with the re-number routine in such a way that when the program is Loaded in future, it will automatically Run.

When the program is written on to tape, there will be a pause and the screen will clear. The re-number routine can then be called at any time by entering:

```
PRINT USR 17374
```

or 32734 on the 16K version.

```
21 7D 4B LD HL,4B7D ; FIRST LINE IN NO. IN LISTING
11 8A 00 LD DE,8A
7E       LD A,(HL)      TEST FOR END OF BASIC LISTING
FE 76    CP 76
20 05    JRNZ
23       INC HL
7E       LD A,(HL)
FE 76    CP 76
C8       RET Z          ; IF SO, RETURN TO BASIC
2B       DEC HL         ; OTHERWISE RENUMBER
72       LD (HL),D
23       INC HL
73       LD (HL),E
06 0A    LD B,0A        , INC LINE NO. BY 10
19       ADD HL,DE
10 FD    DJNZ
23       INC HL
7E       LD A,(HL)
FE 76    CP 76          ; TEST FOR END OF PROG LINE
20 F8    JRNZ
23       INC HL
18 E4    JR             , JUMP
```

Free memory

Paul Brittain
Chelmsford, Essex

ZX-81

IF YOU LOOK at the memory map for your Sinclair computer — page 171 ZX 81 manual, page 106 ZX 80 manual — you will see that the free memory is bounded at the upper end by the machine stack, and at the lower end by the top of the Basic system. Thus to find the amount of free memory at any particular moment, you must subtract the relevant system variable from the SP register.

However, since it is not possible to access the contents of a register directly from Basic, a machine-code routine must be used, such as the one I have written.

Turning to the listing, you can see that the machine code required is relatively simple, and for the most part self-explanatory. However, I shall attempt to answer two questions likely to arise.

First, as you may have noticed, the system variable marking the top of the Basic system is DF END — address 16400 — in the case of the 4K ROM, or STKEND — address 16412 — in the case of the 8K ROM and ZX 81.

Secondly, note that the 8K ROM version contains extra instructions to transfer the result from the HL register into the BC register, and to satisfy the return conditions. These instructions should be added to all routines converted from the 4K ROM if they are to function correctly — especially those which give a numeric result or alter the IX or I registers.

Finally, some notes on how to use the program. Since the code is entirely position independent, it can be placed anywhere convenient in memory. For this reason I have not included any addresses in the listing.

When storing the machine code, my favourite method is to Poke it into a Rem statement in the first line of a Basic program, remembering that the address of the first byte after the Rem is 16427 in 4K ROM machines, and 16514 in 8K ROM machines. For further details on this and other methods of storing machine code, consult the article by Trevor Sharples in the August/September issue.

Once the routine has been loaded into memory, it is called using:

```
PRINT USR (address)
```

where address is the one to which the first byte was Poked. This will result in the number of bytes of free memory being displayed on the screen.

```
DECIMAL   HEX     INSTR          COMMENTS
175       AF      XOR A          ,zero A,reset C flag
103       67      LD H,A         ;zero HL (quicker
111       6F      LD L,A         ,  than LD HL,0,0)
57        39      ADD HL,SP      ,leads SP into HL
237,75,28,64      LD BC,(16412)  ,top of BASIC into BC
237,66    ED,42   SBC HL,BC      ,subtract giving free
                                 ,memory
229       E5      PUSH HL        ;transfer result
```

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```
193          C1          POP BC          ; into BC
253,33,0,64  FD,21,00,40 LD IY,4000 H    ;satisfy
62,30        3E,1E       LD A,1E H       ;  return
237,71       ED,47       LD I,A          ;    conditions
201          C9          RET             ;return to BASIC
```

4K ROM (11BYTES)

```
DECIMAL      HEX         INSTR           COMMENTS
175          AF          XOR A           ;zero A,reset C flag
103          67          LD H,A          ;zero HL (quicker
111          6F          LD L,A          ;  than LD HL,0,0)
237,75,16,64 ED,4B,10,40 LD BC,(16400)   ;top of BASIC into BC
237,66       ED,42       SBC HL,BC       ;subtract giving free
                                         ;memory
201          C9          RET             ;return to BASIC
```

Mortgage calculator

J Considine,
North Fernby,
Humberside

PET

```
5 PRINT"[CLR][CURS DOWN][WHITE]"[RVS]M*****************[OFF]A
10 PRINT"[RED][RVS]*MORTGAGE CALCULATOR*
20 PRINT"[RED][RVS]*****************[OFF]"
25 REM*[RVS] J CONSIDINE 27/7/81*
30 PRINT"[CURS DOWN][RED][RVS] [WHITE] MENU"
35 PRINT"[RED] [OFF]"
40 PRINT"[CURS DOWN][RED]LIST OF CHANGING VARIABLES ARE:-"
50 PRINT"[CLR][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][RVS] [OFF] MONTHLY REPAYMENTS "
60 PRINT"[CLR][CURS DOWN][RVS]1. [OFF] AMOUNT BORROWED"
70 PRINT"[CURS DOWN][RVS]2. [OFF] NUMBER OF REPAYMENT YEARS "
80 PRINT"[CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][RVS]PRESS [OFF]ION NO TO CONTINUE."
100 GOSUB5000
110 PRINT"[CLR][RED]"[RVS]TYPE[OFF]
120 INPUT"[CURS DOWN]"; [OFF]
1000 PRINT"[CLR][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN] SHOW EFFECT ON [RVS]MONTHLY REPAYMENTS"
1005 PRINT"[CURS DOWN]TYPE IN NEW VALUES [RVS] "
1010 INPUT"[CURS DOWN][WHITE] BORROWED [OFF]"
1020 INPUT"[CURS DOWN]ANNUAL RATE OF INTEREST[ ( 1 IS ETC ) ] [RVS]A [OFF]
1030 INPUT"[CURS DOWN] IN YEARS PAYBACK [OFF]"
1040 AR=A*A/12:[+A*TR] A2=A*(AR/(1-[+C))
1050 PRINT"[CURS DOWN]WITH THE ABOVE VALUES YOUR MONTHLY
1060 PRINT"REPAYMENT WILL BE: [CURS]"
1070 PRINT"[RED][RVS]*[RVS]* [OFF]COLS POUNDS
1080 GOTO9000
2000 PRINT"[CLR][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN] SHOW HOW MUCH YOU CAN BORROW
2010 INPUT"[CURS DOWN]MONTHLY REPAYMENTS [RVS]AR [OFF]"
2020 INPUT"[CURS DOWN]ANNUAL RATE OF INTEREST[ ( 1 IS ETC ) ] [RVS]A=A/100
2030 INPUT"[CURS DOWN] IN YEARS PAYBACK [OFF]"
2040 AR=A*A/12:[+A*TR] A2=AR*(1-[+C))
2050 PRINT"[CURS DOWN]WITH THE ABOVE VALUES YOUR [RVS]REPAYMENT"
2060 PRINT"[CURS DOWN]WILL BE: [CURS]"
2070 PRINT"[RED][RVS]*[RVS]* [OFF]COLS POUNDS"
2080 GOTO9000
3000 PRINT"[CLR][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN]PRESS [RVS] A [OFF] FOR MENU
3010 RETURN
4000 PRINT [CURS][CLR][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN][CURS DOWN]PRESS [RVS] A [OFF] FOR MENU
4010 COSUB5000
4020 IRAN= M"[RVS]
4030 RETURN
```

As the greatest expense incurred by any family is buying a house, the effect of changes in mortgage payments should be quickly checked. To simplify the check, I have written Mortgage Calculator, which allows you to see what happens when any variable is changed.

The menu allows you to select which variable to re-calculate and therefore many options can be investigated quickly without repeated manual calculations.

Line drawer

Guy Brooker,
St Albans, Hertfordshire

ZX-81

In the ZX 81 manual, in chapter 18 on graphics, there is an exercise containing a subroutine which plots a line between two pixel co-ordinates on the screen. Line Drawer performs this same function at half the length of the program in the manual and using fewer variables. This means it would be very useful to a 1K machine owner.

The variables X2,Y2 — the co-ordinates of the end of the line — and X1,Y1 — the co-ordinates of the beginning of the line — must be initialised before entering the subroutine.

It draws the line by first finding the height and width of the line then starts a loop which is as long as the greater of these two. Having plotted the first position, it increments the current co-ordinates by the fractions ' width over greater length ' and ' height over greater length '. It continues the loop until the final pixel is reached and returns to the main program.

```
1000    LET G=0
1005    LET H=0
1010    LET X=X2-X1
1015    LET Y=Y2-Y1
1020    LET Z=ABS X
1025    IF ABS Y>Z THEN LET Z=ABS Y
1030    FOR F=1 TO Z
1035    PLOT G+X1,H+Y1
1040    LET G=G+X/Z
1045    LET H=H+Y/Z
1050    NEXT F
1060    RETURN
```

Atomic invaders

Jonathan Histed
Chislehurst, Kent

GENIE

The idea is to shoot down as many invaders before they overrun you. They appear from the bottom and move upwards. Each invader is three characters wide and you have to hit them using bombs which fall downwards. You fire them by pressing the control key. The bomb then tumbles from the present position of your destroyer which you move with the shift key for left, and the repeat key for right.

The destroyer stays on the top line during the game. While one drops a bomb, one can still move, but one cannot drop another one. At the beginning of the game you are asked for the delay which is how many moves you have compared to with their one. 70 is average. The lower the number the harder it is and more skilful.

It also asks you the number of invaders. This is the total number which will appear. The higher the number, the harder it is.

Finally, it asks you for the height they must reach. This is the number of lines from the bottom they must reach to end the game.

Each time an invader appears, it is always on the bottom line of the screen and all the others which are still left on the screen scroll up.

1000-1999 are a set up routine.

2000m — Small letters after the line number are a label used in jumps/Gosubs. This subroutine is for movement and timing by the person.

3000f — If a bomb is falling, a branch is made to this subroutine. If the bomb hits a side of an alien it is deflected. If it has one a branch is made to 3500.

3500 — An alien is hit. Check for no more on the screen if so make another one appear. It also wipes out alien.

4000a — Checks for aliens turn. It sounds the

internal loudspeaker, plots a new one, checks for any going above the line and moves the others up

5000 — The End subroutine. It prints out relevant data. A total score is not provided though this could be added to the program if it is needed.

The whole program sits in about 1.5K of memory though I think it might be possible to fit it in an unexpanded Atom, if pains are taken to exclude spaces, shorten commands, etc.

```
   1  INPUT "DELAY ";D: INPUT "NO. OF INVADERS";K:F=ABS(R):K=ABS(K)
   2  IF F>20 OR K>30 GOTO 1
   3  INPUT "THE HEIGHT THEY MUST GET TO";V:V=ABS(V):IF V>15 G 3
   5  W=25:D=0:F=0:A=1:U=0
  10  P.$12 "REI"+A+"CR"+STR$(D)+" P.$15                    P=15:F=0
  20  V=V+CC+FLOAT.D*.0*.0 L=SQR(CF*2
  30  GOSUB 1000
  40  GOSUB N:U=U+1
  50  IF F=1 GOSUB F.
  60  GOSUB G.
  70  GOTO 40
1000  DIM RA(K)
1010  FOR X=0 TO V:RA(X)=0 NEXT,T=999
1050  RETURN
2000+ F1  D=D.IF?D?10?10+0+0 IF F=0 F=1 X=0+33+P
2010  IF?X=?X<128 IF F>0 F=F-1
2020  IF ?D?20?20?40=0 IF D<29 P=F+1
2030  ?X=?X
2090  RETURN
3000+ FOR M=0 TO 4.?0=32.IF ?X=?FC GOTO 3080
3010  IF?Y=?CF
3020  IF?X=?1C X=X+1
3030  ?X=?1. G=X.IF X=?1ED F=0 M=4,?X=32
3040  X=X+32 NEXT
3050  RETURN
3080  X=1+M X=16-(X-8)/32) RA(X)=8 F=0 L=S+1 M=4 IF S=0 LETT=999
3510  IF S=1+K GOTO e
3520  GOTO 3040
4000+ T=T+1.IF TCR RETURN
4040  ?D=32 T=0 F M=? TO? STEP-1 RA(M)=RA(M-1) N ,IFRA(V)<80 P
4010  C.$7 IF A<1 RETURN
4020  K=K-1 S=D+1 RA 1)=RA(M)+2+1.!(RA(1)+8+479)-L
4999  RETURN
5000+ IFRA(V )=0 GOTO5005
5003  M=RA(V )+8?IF ?32 FORX ATO? P.$7 :H=H 8888888 NEXT
5040  FORX=?T01: P.$7 H. P." BOOOLOOOOOOOM !" "YOU DESTROYED "S
5010  P."INVADERS " " OUT OF THE "D" THAT APPEARED"
5020  IFRA(0 )=0 P."ONE FLEW ABOVE THE LINE AT A HEIGHT OF "V
5030  P." AND IT TOOK YOU "U" MOVES "                BYE FOR NOW !!"
5099  END
```

Moving graphics

Loll Holt
Warsley, Manchester

ZX-81

WHY SO MUCH fuss is kicked up about moving graphics on the ZX 81 is easy to understand: most ZX 80 owners will tell you its most severe limitation — barring, possibly, the integer Basic — is the screen flicker. This setback, which even new ROM ZX 80 owners suffer, makes real-time, continuous, non-flicker moving graphics impossible in Basic.

The ZX-81 is free from screen flicker, but this does not make good moving graphics programs easy to write. Here are a few of the tricks necessary to achieve a convincing and professional moving display in just 1K RAM — and in Basic. It even includes an addictive moving graphics game to illustrate the points.

There are, effectively, two types of moving graphics programs for the ZX 81: those which require a permanent display of which only a part moves, e.g., a maze game, and those in which not much is displayed and so the screen can be cleared completely in between moves.

The advantage of the second group is that clearing the screen saves memory by preventing the computer remembering lines of blank spaces where something used to be. The disadvantage is that, unless there is very little to be re-drawn after each CLS, such programs tend to be very slow.

Already it can be seen that memory saving plays a large part in graphical-program design. However, moving graphics programs have the additional problem of time-saving: programs which use too much display — unless you have 16K RAM — or which have 30 lines between each move are less than useless. Remember, these programs have to work in slow mode to avoid screen flicker.

To overcome these two main problems — time and memory — several programming tricks must be used to produce a program which, apart from being interesting and useful, actually works.

The usual structure of moving graphics programs is a loop in which the display is updated by erasing the current positions of the moving object, calculating their new positions and displaying them before returning for another pass through the loop. The loop must also contain a test for leaving the loop, e.g., has time run out? or a finish position been reached? etc. Let us now consider each part of this loop in turn before looking at the other parts of the program.

Why erase the moving objects before you know where they are going to go next? The reason is that their positions are remembered by two variables, usually L for line and C for column when using Print At statements or X and Y for Plot statements. These two variables are updated continuously.

Thus, it is essential to erase the object before its position is changed and its old position forgotten. However, if the moving objects are the only things on the screen, the whole screen can be cleared at once and this does not have to be done until the new positions have been calculated.

We now examine two possible components of the calculating new positions part of the loop. Most moving graphics programs require a method by which the user can affect the display, usually by means of moving a cursor. Using the Inkey£ instruction, such an effect can be easily created. In the following program, L is the line and C the column denoting the cursor's position. By pressing the unshifted cursor keys 5 to 8, the user can move the cursor by altering its line and column numbers and thus its position on the screen.

```
10 LET L=10
20 LET C=15
30 PRINT AT L,C; ■
40 LET L=L+(INKEY£="8")-(INKEY£="7")
50 LET L=L+(L<0)-(L>21)
60 LET C=C+(INKEY£="5")-(INKEY£="6")
70 LET C=C+(C<0)-(C>31)
80 CLS
90 GOTO 30
```

Lines 40 to 70 use the special end of loop conditional statement of the ZX 81 and ZX 80. If the part in brackets is true, it counts as 1, if not, it counts as 0. The conditional statement re-positions the cursor. Lines 40 and 60, and secondly prevents it wandering off the edge of the screen, lines 50 and 70. This small section of the program is fundamental to almost all moving graphics programs in which the user plays a part. You will find yourself using lines 30 to 70, in identical form, over and over again.

The Plot statement can be used to create a ball which moves in a diagonal fashion around the screen, changing direction when it meets the edge of the screen. The following program illustrates how this is done, again using the special conditional statement.

```
10 LET H=1
20 LET V=1
30 LET X=31
40 LET Y=21
50 PLOT X,Y
60 LET H=(X=0)-(X=63)+H*(X>0 AND X<63)
70 LET V=(Y=0)-(Y=43)+V*(Y>0 AND Y<63)
80 LET X=X+H
90 LET Y=Y+V
100 CLS
110 GOTO 50
```

H and V are the horizontal and vertical directions of the ball: they are changed only when the ball reaches the edge of the screen. X and Y cannot be changed directly as it would then prove difficult to remember which way the ball was travelling.

The two processes we have just examined are extremely useful and are the basis of the main program. Notice that, as yet, we have no means of leaving these loops. Let us now cover the rest of the potential program.

The ZX-81 has an in-built clock which counts in .02 of a second. At the start of the program it may be set to some known value by Poking locations 16436 and 16437. These may be Peeked to find the elapsed time. The clock counts down so it must be set to a large value and this value subtracted from the result of the Peeks at a later stage. Beware of letting the clock count down to zero as this results in the system crashing completely.

This feature has obvious applications for imposing time limits or timing the user in completing a certain task. It is usual to insert a test in the loop already described to see if time is up or if the task has been completed.

If there is some permanent display, such as a maze, the screen cannot be cleared completely so it is necessary to erase the previous position of the moving object as already described. The display itself is, of course, drawn at the start of the program and remains throughout. The end of the program merely consists of printing information such as time or score.

You now have the basic information necessary to write a moving graphics program on the ZX 81. Even so, the task is not as easy as it sounds. Most of your programs will go one of two ways — and sometimes both.

You will run out of memory or your program will be so slow that it is a great presumption to call it moving graphics. Here are a few tips.

(continued on page 71)

ZX81 goes REALTIME

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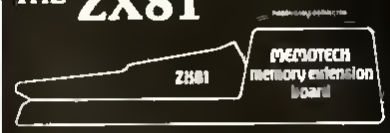

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(continued from page 69)

- Keep instructions in the loop as sparse as possible to avoid a slow program
- Keep the program as short as you can to save memory for the display — more than 30 lines is generally too much
- Keep the amount to be displayed as small as possible again to save memory
- Keep the amount to be re drawn — that is the moving parts — as small as possible since it takes time to print things

Zero is based on the strange fact that the ZX 81 prints zeros, or variables set to zero, faster than any other character Thus a fast and difficult game can be developed using this fact The aim is to capture as many zeros as you can within 60 seconds You capture one by moving your cursor over the bouncing zero

When you have managed this, another zero appears immediately at a random position This continues for 60 seconds at the end of which your score is displayed Seven is the maximum

Lines 10 to 100 initialise the variables L,C for the cursor, D,M for the zero and H,V also for the zero The loop, starting at 110, clears the screen, prints the cursor and zero, tests for a capture, updates the cursor and zero, tests for time up and returns to the start Line 240 prints the score I at the end of 60 seconds

```
10  RAND
20  LET L = 10
30  LET C = 15
40  LET H = 1
50  LET V = 1
60  POKE 16437, 255
70  POKE 16436, 103
80  FOR I = 0 TO 25
90  LET M = INT(RND*22)
100 LET D = INT(RND*32)
110 CLS
120 PRINT AT L,C; "■"; AT M,D; "0"
130 IF L=M AND C=D THEN NEXT I
140 IF INKEY$ = "" THEN GOTO 190
150 LET L = L + (INKEY$="6") - (INKEY$="7")
160 LET L = L + (L<0) - (L>21)
170 LET C = C + (INKEY$="0") - (INKEY$="5")
180 LET C = C + (C<0) - (C>31)
190 LET H = (D=0) - (D=31) + H*(D>0 AND D<31)
200 LET V = (M=0) - (M=21) + V*(M>0 AND M<21)
210 LET D = D + H
220 LET M = M + V
230 IF PEEK 16437 243 THEN GOTO 110
240 PRINT AT 3,13; I
```

At your command

David Jones
London N9

GENIE

OWNERS OF TRS 80 level 2 and Video Genie systems without discs may be interested to note that they can use disc Basic commands to run their machine-code routines This is achieved in a similar manner to the use of X=USR(0)

TRS 80 disc Basic is not normally resident in the computer as it is loaded from disc into a reserved area of RAM from such programs as TRSDOS and NewDOS80 Although the machine code of the disc Basic is not available to non-disc users, the command list is

When the computer executes a DOS command, control is passed from the ROM to a portion of reserved RAM which gives a jump address for that command When the computer is switched on, this area of RAM is initialised so that the jump address of all DOS commands is the start of the syntax-error routine in the ROM When a DOS is loaded, the jump addresses within the DOS

From this it can be seen that a few Pokes in the RAM at the correct place will cause disc Basic commands to jump to whatever address we like For example, if we wish the disc Basic command Line to run Tandy's line re number program, Renum, we would have to cause Line to jump to 7C4C which is the start address of Renum The jump vector of Line is 41A3H so

41A3 C3 4C 7C JP 7C4CH

or

Poke 16803, 195 Poke 16804, 76 Poke 16805, 124

will cause a jump from Line to the address 7C4CH and therefore run the line re number program The other disc Basic commands and their jump vectors are

CVI	4152	FN	4155	CVS	4158	DEF	415B
CVD	415E	EOF	4161	LOC	4164	LOF	4167
MKI#	416A	MKS#	416D	MKD#	4170	CMD	4173
TIME#	4176	OPEN	4179	FIELD	417C	GET	417F
PUT	4182	CLOSE	4185	LOAD	4188	MERGE	418B
NAME	418E	KILL	4191	&	4194	LSET	4197
RSET	419A	INSTR	419D	SAVE	41A0		

TRS-80 compatibility

Gareth Monkman
Driffield, East Yorkshire

GENIE

HAVING BOUGHT a Video Genie some 18 months or so ago, advertised as fully compatible to TRS 80 software, I soon discovered that not only was it not machine code-compatible but also not even Basic level 2 compatible However, with the addition of the Tab and Clear keys, it is at least now Basic compatible

Recently, with the addition of a Microtek MT 80P printer, I found myself in the same position regarding compatibility For example, the editor/assembler EDTASM and the disassembler RSM2/2D would not output to the printer The reason was that TRS 80 software drives the printer by outputting to memory position 37EBH, while the Video Genie uses port FD for printer input/output

Here are the necessary modifications for both editor/assembler and disassembler programs originally written for the TRS-80

The following modifications can be done by using RSM2D, which can be used to modify itself, as well as EDTASM TBug can also be used, but only on RSM as it normally resides in the same memory location as EDTASM and so one of the two must first be moved to another location EDTASM is resident in 4300H to 5D41H 45CA 32E837 LD (37E8) A is the TRS-80 version of memory locations 45CAH, 45CBH and 45CCH, and serves to load the contents of the accumulator into location 37EB for driving the printer This must be changed to the following 45CA D3FD00 OUT A FD This loads the contents of the accumulator out to port FD which is the Video Genie printer port

45DB 32E837 LD (37E8), A must also be changed to 45CA D3FD00 The 00 part is a non operation to fill in the empty space

45EE 3AE837 LD A, (37EB) checks printer status by loading the contents of memory location 37EB into the accumulator and must be changed as follows 45EE DBFD00 IN A, FD which loads the accumulator from port FD

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

The disassembler is normally resident from 6C00 to 7E0C. 705B 21E837 LD A, 37E8 loads the accumulator with the contents of 37EB and can be replaced by a call to the printer routine in Basic ROM thus 705B CDD205 CALL 05D2

70B4 3E0A LD A, 0A loads the accumulator with 0AH, which is the Hex equivalent for carriage return and must be eliminated, as the ROM routine at 05D2H creates its own carriage return

Therefore if it is left, you obtain two carriage returns which tends to waste paper, especially over long listings of memory. It can be removed simply by replacing the entire function with non operations ie 70B4 00 00 NOP NOP

If you take the trouble to disassemble RSM, or use the Hunt facility to find all the positions of 37EB you will also find another at location 6D30H.

6D30 3AE837 LD A, (37EB) must be left as it is, otherwise the program fouls and you may have to re-load

Bigger screen

Nigel Moat,
Colchester, Essex

ZX-81

WHILE EXPERIMENTING on my ZX 81 I found a way of putting two extra lines at the bottom of the screen. In the manual on page 123 it states that you cannot Print or Plot on these two lines — which is true, but you can Poke on to these two lines just the same way as you Poke on to the rest of the screen. This can be very useful when you need a slightly larger screen.

With these two extra lines, your game displays can be larger. The extra lines can also be used to display messages, i.e., a message showing who wrote the program. Here is an example program to Poke on to these lines.

```
10  REM***POKE ON TO BOTTOM TWO LINES***
20  REM***  FOR ZX81 WITH 16K RAM***
30  LET X=PEEK 16296+256 * PEEK 16297
40  FOR N=1 TO 792
50  IF PEEK (X+N)<>118 THEN POKE X+N, 23
60  NEXT N
```

This program Poked an asterisk on to every screen location, including the extra lines at the bottom. If it is used with only 1K RAM, a display file will have to be set up first — it is already there with the RAM pack. Here is an example program to print on to those lines.

```
10  REM *** PRINT A STRING ON TO BOTTOM LINES ***
20  REM *** FOR ZX81 WITH 16K RAM ***
40  LET A$="PROGRAM BY NIGEL MOAT"
50  LET X=PEEK 16296 + 256 * PEEK 16297
60  FOR N=1 TO 792 - LEN A$
70  LET Y=CODE A$(N-34)
80  POKE N+X, Y
90  NEXT N
```

This program prints A$ at the bottom of the screen. Finally, here is a program using the bigger screen. This program draws a box and then 140 blocks in random positions. You are the asterisk in the middle of the screen and you have to navigate yourself around the screen, without touching the barrier or the blocks or the trail of asterisks that you leave behind.

To move, you press "W" to go up, "X" to go down, "A" to go left and "D" to go right. Once you have started moving you cannot stop but can only change direction by pressing the appropriate key. At the top of the screen there are two scores. The first is the present score — the second is the highest so far. It starts easy but grows harder as the screen fills. You can make it harder by changing the number of blocks in line 160.

(continued on page 74)

```
10  LET H=0
20  SLOW
30  LET X = PEEK 16296+256*PEEK16397
40  FOR N=34 TO 65
50  POKE N+X,120
60  NEXT N
70  FOR N=65 TO 792 STEP 33
80  POKE N+X,120
90  NEXT N
100 FOR N=791 TO 760 STEP-1
110 POKE N+X,120
120 NEXT N
130 FOR N=760 TO 34 STEP-33
140 POKE N+X,120
150 NEXT N
160 FOR N=1 TO 140
170 LET P=INT(RND*750)+34
100 IF PEEK(X+P)<>0 THEN GOTO 170
190 POKE X+P,120
200 NEXT N
210 PRINT AT 0,7,"000"; TAB 23,"000"
220 PRINT AT 0,  -(LEN(STR$ H)), H
230 LET X=X+301
240 LET S=0
250 POKE X,23
260 LET C$="0"
270 LET B$=INKEY$
200 IF B$="W" OR B$="X" OR B$="A" OR B$="D"
    THEN GOTO 300
290 LET B$=C$
300 IF B$="0" TNEN GOTO 270
310 LET C$=B$
320 IF B$="W" TNEN LET X=X-33
330 IF B$="A" TNEN LET X=X-1
340 IF B$="D" THEN LET X=X+1
350 IF B$="X" THEN LET X=X+33
360 IF PEEK X<>0 TNEN GOTO 390
362 POKE X,23
380 GOTO 270
390 POKE X,151
400 IF S>H THEN LET N=S
410 PRINT AT 0,13 "PRESS ANY KEY"
420 IF INKEY$<>""THEN GOTO 420
430 IF INKEY$=""THEN GOTO 430
440 CLS
450 GOTO 30
365 LET S=S+1
370 PRINT AT 0, -(LEN(STR$ S)),S
```

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Revolutionary art

S Farr,
Hampshire

ZX-81

THIS REVOLUTIONARY new program plots three dimensional pictures. The program is for a 3K or larger ZX-81. When the program is run, you have to enter an equation which must contain the values X or Y or both. The program then prints the picture, which takes about three minutes.

Here are four different demonstration lines which can be entered into the machine when the program is run, or you can create your own input lines and see your own masterpiece being created.

```
1 SIN(X/13)* SIN(Y/6 5)* 30
2 (SIN((X 10)/6 5)+1)* (SIN((Y-6)/3 25)
  +1)*8
3 SIN(X/6 5)* SIN(Y/6 5)* 15+11
4 SIN(X/6 5)* SIN(Y/3 25)* 10+11
```

```
10  FAST
20  REM ** 3-D EQUATION PLOTTER **
30  DIM WK(  )*4
40  INPUT Z$
50  FOR Y = 0 TO  3
60  FOR X = 0 TO 42
70  LET Z = VAL Z$ + 1
80  IF  WK(  )=Y+1) OR WK( Y OR X = 4  THEN LET W(2,X+Y+1) = Z
90  IF  DW(1,X+Y+1) OR INT Y OR  = 4  THEN LET W(1,X+Y+1) = Z
100 IF WK(  )=Y+1) = OR D(1,X+Y+1  = THEN IF Z<44 AND Z>-1 THEN
PLOT X+Y,Z
110 NEXT X
120 NEXT Y
```

Instant execution

D Jansone
Bolton

GENIE

WHEN EITHER of these two routines replace the End statement of an assembler program, they enable execution immediately the program has loaded. Version 1 intercepts the keyboard scan routine and sends back an oblique then an Enter just as if they had been typed in through the keyboard.

Version 2 intercepts the keyboard scan routine, resets the driver address to 03E3H, then loads the start address from the system tape entry point store, 40DFH, and jumps to it. The main assembler program is assumed to start at Srart, this can easily be altered as required.

```
VERSION 1

CHANGE LD HL,CHANG2
       LD (4016H),HL
       LD A,'/'
       RET
CHANG2 LD HL,0DH
       LD (4016H),HL
       LD A,0DH
       RET
       ORG 4016H
       DEFW CHANGE
       END START
```

```
VERSION 2

CHANGE LD HL,03E3H
       LD (4016H),HL
       LD HL,(40DFH)
       JP (HL)
       ORG 4016H
       DEFW CHANGE
       END START
```

Figure handling

B M Hawkes
Budleigh Salterton,
Devon

ZX-81

ALTHOUGH BASIC is a mathematically orientated language, the versions on most hobbyist micros suffer from excessive accuracy — the results are displayed to far more significant figures than are required for most purposes. This can be awkward when the results are to be tabulated, especially in such micros as the ZX-81, where the number of characters per line is only 32.

Also, tabulation is normally left justified, whereas it is neater to align the decimal points. These subroutines are designed to carry out those operations.

The first corrects a number of N significant figures, the second to N places of decimals, and the third prints a number with the decimal point at a specified tabulator position. In the first two, it is assumed that the number is already held as A and that N is also held. At the end of the subroutine, A is corrected to the given accuracy. If the full value is required also, a line such as LET B=A should be inserted beforehand.

In the third program, the number to be printed is again assumed to be held as A, but the tabulator position X of the decimal point is inserted by an Input statement in the subroutine, though it could equally well be inserted by a Let or a Data statement if appropriate to the machine concerned.

Although the programs are written in ZX 81 Basic, the modifications likely to be required for other dialects have been noted.

Lines 510-550 handle integers, 560-650 handle decimals with an integral part, and 660-720 handle decimals less than one. The following modifications are likely to be needed for other dialects of Basic. Line 580

IF ASC(MID$(A$,X,1))=46 THEN GOTO 610

Line 670

IF ASC(MID$(A$,Y,1))>47 THEN GOTO 700

Also many Basics use "up arrow" for exponentiation where Sinclair uses two asterisks, so this may need to be altered, and in some Basics storage space could be saved by omitting Let, etc.

To correct A to N decimal places

```
600 LET X = 10**N
610 LET A = INT(A*X+0 5)
620 RETURN
```

This should run with any Basic dialect except, of course, integer Basics. To align decimal points in a list

```
600 INPUT X
610 LET M = LEN STR$ INT A
620 IF INT(10*A)<>0 OR A=0 THEN GOTO 640
630 LET M = M-1
640 PRINT TAB X-N; A
650 RETURN
```

```
500  IF INT A <> A THEN GOTO 560
510  IF A < 10**N THEN RETURN
520  LET X = LEN STR$ A
530  LET A = A+5*10**(X-N-1)
540  LET A = 10**(X-N)*INT(A/10**(X-N))
550  RETURN
560  LET A$ = STR$ A
570  LET X = 1
580  IF CODE A$(X) = 27 THEN GOTO 610
590  LET X = X +1
600  GOTO 500
610  IF A < 1 THEN GOTO 660
620  LET A = A + 5 * 10 ** (X-N-2)
630  LET Y = 10**(N-N+1)
640  LET A = INT(A*Y)/Y
650  RETURN
660  LET Z = 1
670  IF CODE A$(Z)>28 THEN GOTO 700
680  LET Z = Z + 1
690  GOTO 670
700  LET A = A + 5*10**(X-Z-N)
710  LET Y = 10**(N+Z-X-1)
720  GOTO 640
```

Spacefire

Marcus Altman,
Westcliff on-Sea Essex

PET

THIS GAME is in two parts: the first is a maze and the second is a Space Invaders type game.

The program starts by asking you if you want to play the easy or difficult version of the game. In the hard version there are explosive mines to avoid in the second part of the game which are absent in the easy version. You are then asked if you want instructions and once you have either read them or skipped them, you progress to the first part of the game.

In the top left-hand corner of the screen you will see the time ticking away second by second. When it reaches 200, the game is over and you are told so. You have to find your way through the maze as quickly as possible by using the keys described in the instructions. Once you arrive within one square of the dot at the top of the screen, you are put into the second part of the game automatically.

The idea here is to destroy as many of the enemy ships as you can. They will swoop down from the mother-ship at the top of the screen at various angles. They leave the screen at one side and they will return from the opposite side.

You can move your sight around the screen using the same keys as for the maze but you do not have to keep on banging the keys because once you have pressed a key to move in a certain direction, your sight will move that way until you press another or press 7 which stops your movement. To make the game a little easier, when you move up or down, the enemy ships stay where they are and start to move again when you stop or turn sideways.

To fire, press 5. If the enemy is on one of the crosspieces of your sight when you fire, you score five points, but if you hit it dead centre, you score 10 points.

```
1 PRINT"
1 PRINT THIS IS THE GAME OF "SPACEFIRE AND IT WAS
  PRINT"                  ENTERED BY MARCUS ALTMAN"
  PRINT:GOTO 10
4 PRINT"  DO YOU WANT TO PRACTISE?(Y/N)"
5 GET A$:
  IF A$="Y" THEN GOTO 10
  IF A$="N" THEN GOTO 30
7 X=0:S=0
8 PRINT"
10 PRINT"DO YOU WANT TO PLAY THE EASY OR HARD    GAME E-OR H?"
11 GET A$:IF A$="E" THEN S=1:GOTO 4
12 IF A$="H" THEN S=0:GOTO 4
13 GOTO 11
20 PRINT"
25 PRINT"IN THE FIRST PART YOU HAVE TO GET TO              THE END OF THE MAZE."
27 PRINT"USE TO CONTROL YOUR SHIP."
28 PRINT"USE WHEN YOU GET OUT OF THE MAZE YOU GO INTO              BATTLE COMPUTER."
34 IF S=1 THEN GOTO 36
35 PRINT"IF YOU HIT A MINE YOU LOSE 1 OF 5 LIVES."
36 PRINT
37 PRINT"IN HARD MODE YOU GET ONLY ONE MINE              ENEMY SHIPS ARE POSSIBLE."
38 GOTO 7
40 PRINT"YOUR SIGHT ARE MOVED THE SAME AS ABOVE AND TO FIRE PRESS 5."
50 PRINT"AND CAN HIT WITH THE EDGE OF THE ENEMY AND SCORE 5 NOT 10."
51 PRINT"YOUR SIGHT KEEP ON ON THE SAME DIRECTION ON THE LAST NO."
  PRINT"PRESS 7 UNTIL YOU PRESS A DIFFERENT NUMBER."
52 PRINT"THE TIME VERY LIMITED."
60 PRINT"PRESS ENTER TO GO ON"
69 PRINT:IF A$=CHR$(13)THEN GOTO 80
70 GET Y$:IF LEN Y$=0 THEN GOTO 70
  REM SET UP MAZE
79 PRINT"?":FOR I=32TO 38:POKE I,42:NEXT I
80 LET C=0:D=0
81 POKE 1,46
82 LET T=INT(4*RND(1)+4*T)
83 LET L=INT(4*RND(1)+1)
84 IF L=1 THEN L=2
85 IF T=0 THEN T=1
86 IF L=0 THEN L=2
87 POKE 38,0
88 IF 36>0 THEN GOTO 79
89 GOTO 79
90 LET FF=INT(RND(RNE(3)*6+8))
94 IF FF=0 THEN FF=1
95 FOR E=1 TO FF
96 NEXT E
98 LET E=INT(4*RND(1)+3*T*2)
100 POKE E,49
110 GOTO 131
111 REM RESET TIMER
115 LET T=0
116 T=0
118 GOSUB 7
119 REM GET KEY FOR MOVING SHIP
120 GET F$
130 PRINT"?":PRINT
140 POKE E,5
141 IF F$=" " THEN G=-40          GOTO 170
142 IF F$="4" THEN G=-1          GOTO 170
150 IF F$="6" THEN G=1          GOTO 170
160 IF F$="8" THEN G=-40          GOTO 170
165 GOTO 119
167 REM MOVE SHIP AND SEE IF IT HAS HIT A SQUARE
170 POKE E,E+G
171 IF PEEK(E+G)=46 THEN:GOTO 200
172 POKE E,5
200 IF PEEK(E+G)=46 THEN GOTO 300
201 GOTO 119
250 GOTO 200
254 REM DON'T LET SHIP TO H WHERE
255 POKE E,160:POKE G:POKE E,43
258 GOTO 119
259 REM SET TIMES TO B AND SET UP SCREEN
300 PRINTCHR$(14):FOR I=0 TO 20:FOR F=1"B" 0-0 %=0 I=0 J=0 :NEXT
301 POKE 36,0:LET B=INT(T/5)
310 FOR P=0 TO 20:POKE P,160:NEXT P
324 REM THE
325 FOR M=1 TO 200
330 LET M=INT(RND(RND(1)*4)*20)
340 POKE M,46
345 NEXT M
349 REM MINES
350 IF S=1 THEN GOTO 360
351 FOR J=1 TO 10
355 LET S5=INT(RND(RND(1)+5))
356 POKE S5,25
358 NEXT J
359 REM SIGHTS
360 X=200:Y=INT(RND(1)*4)
361 POKE X,5:POKE X,83:POKE X+40,83
362 LOSUB 4000
369 REM ENEMY SHIP
370 LET F=INT(1+RND(1)*4)
371 LOSUB 4000
380 REM SET ANGLE OF MOVEMENT
381 LET B=INT(RND(1)*20)
382 POKE C,[illegible]:POKE G,83
383 IF C=0 THEN POKE C,32:GOTO 390
```

```
440 NEXT E:
441 LET Z=X:P=X/40:IF X>20 THEN GOTO 4000
44 PRINT"@":PRINT:PRINT"@":PRINT
450 IF E$=" " THEN F=40
451 IF E$="4" THEN F=-1
470 IF E$="6" THEN F=1
480 IF E$="8" THEN F=-40
490 IF E$=" " THEN GOTO 500
495 IF F=0 THEN F=0
497 REM MOVE SIGHT, AND SEE IF SIGHT HAVE TOUCHED A MINE
500 POKE X,5:POKE X,32:POKE X,32:POKE 33,32
520 IF X<0THEN X=X+40:P=P+40:X=X+F
521 IF PEEK 3,25 THEN GOTO 1000
530 IF PEEK(X)=" " THEN GOTO 500
531 IF PEEK(X)=" " THEN GOTO 500
534 IF PEEK(X)=" " THEN GOTO 500
535 POKE X,5:POKE 33,5:POKE X,83:POKE 33,83
536 REM SIGHT HAS HIT A MINE YOU LOSE
538 IF X<0 THEN X=-40:GOTO 500
540 IF X>=200 THEN X=40 GOTO 2000
545 IF F=40 THEN GOTO 440
546 IF F=-40 THEN GOTO 440
550 GOTO 420
600 REM FIRING AN ENEMY
540 M=INT(L*31+10)  M=M-40 N=M-40
570 L=L+1:L=L MOD 4:M=M-40:N=N-40
580 NEXT
590 IF M>=33+90 THEN M=32
591 POKE L,84:POKE L,64:POKE M,PO:POKE N,83
592 IF L=0 THEN GOTO 623
600 LOCL 4000
610 IF M<0 THEN L=31+10:M=L+400:N=L+400
615 IF M>=200 THEN M=M-40:N=N-40:POKE K,32:POKE L,32:POKE M,84:POKE N,32
616 IF M<0 THEN LL=5:GOTO 1000
615 IF M<0 THEN LL=5:GOTO 1000
617 IF P=0 THEN LL=5:GOTO 1000
618 IF P<0 THEN LL=5:GOTO 1000
619 IF P>40 THEN LL=5:GOTO 1000
620 IF P=0 THEN POKE P,64:POKE P,64:GOTO 420
623 GOTO 618

999 REM SET UP ENEMY-VOL HIT ENEMY
1000 PRINT"?"
1001 LOCL
1010 PRINT"
1020 PRINT"
1030 PRINT"
1040 PRINT"
1050 PRINT"
1060 PRINT"
1070 PRINT"
1080 PRINT"
1090 PRINT"
1100 PRINT"
1110 PRINT"
1120 PRINT"
1130 FOR I=1 TO 1000:NEXT I
1140 GOTO 300
1999 REM SET UP MOTHER SHIP AGAIN
2000 POKE 7,0:LOCL:POKE 32,5:POKE
2010 FOR P=0 TO 39:POKE P,160:NEXT P
2020 RETURN
2030 REM STOP SIGHT GOING TOO FAR
2040 POKE X,5:POKE 33,5:POKE X,32:POKE 33,32
2050 IF X>39:X=X-40:P=P-40:X=X
2060 POKE X,5:POKE 33,5:POKE 33,32:POKE X,32
2070 RETURN
2080 REM YOU HAVE LUCK YOU VE BEEN HIT
2090 PRINT"?"
2100 PRINT"
2110 PRINT"
2120 PRINT"
2130 PRINT"
2140 PRINT"
2150 PRINT"
2160 PRINT"
2170 FOR I=1 TO 1000:NEXT I
2180 IF S=0 THEN GOTO 2200
2190 GOTO 300
2200 PRINT"?"
2210 PRINT"YOU'VE BEEN HIT 5 TIMES AND SCORED "
2220 PRINT"
2230 PRINT"
2240 PRINT"
2250 PRINT"
2260 PRINT"DO YOU WANT ANOTHER GAME
2270 GET A$:
2280 IF A$="Y" THEN GOTO 8
2290 IF A$="N" THEN END
2300 PRINT"?"
2310 PRINT"
2320 PRINT"YOU'VE RUN OUT OF TIME AND SCORED "
2330 PRINT"
2340 GOTO 4300
```

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

Easing operation

ZX-81

P R Ainsworth
Swansea

I HAVE NOTICED an interesting number of letters from Sinclair ZX 80/81 owners complaining about faults and difficulty of operation. I have owned a ZX 81 for several months and have experienced and investigated many of the problems. Most can be solved and I hope my experiences will save other owners from some of the frustration and annoyance.

Operating temperature is a problem with ZX 80 and ZX 81 not helped on the ZX 81 by the fact that the Sinclair-designed integrated circuit has an operating temperature of 70°C. I have carefully drilled four 25in holes along the back face of the ZX 81, using a sleeve on the drill bit to prevent internal damage to the machine. This allows warm air to escape, and the keyboard remains only slightly warm after several hours of operation.

My cassette recorder, a £20 Ferguson model, has always loaded and saved perfectly using standard C 60 tapes, provided that the correct procedures are followed. A few points worth re-stating are:

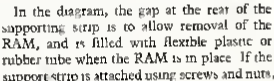
- Disconnect one end of the lead not in use — the ear lead when saving, the microphone lead when loading — this prevents interference and is particularly important during Save to ensure that the five-second silence preceding the program is not distorted.
- When loading programs without using the name option, ensure that the tape is positioned just inside the five second silence before starting the load, otherwise the buzz preceding the silence may cause problems. This is particularly important on the ZX 80 which does not have the named-program facility.
- If you are buying a recorder, avoid the very cheap ones unless you can test them and try to find one with a tape counter.

Intermittent memory failure is an extremely frustrating problem which occurs only since I received my 16K RAM pack. The symptoms are a sudden program crash often just as a key is depressed, with strange patterns appearing on the screen.

The only way to regain control is to power off, although the machine may occasionally re-set itself but clearing its memory in the process. There is not any fault in either ZX 81 or RAM — the problem arises because of the design of the edge connector. The ZX 81 has flexible cushion feet and the RAM does not — as both touch the surface on which the machine rests, and the joint is not rigid, some slight relative movement occurs every time a key or the machine itself is touched.

In these circumstances memory lapses are not just possible — they are inevitable. Cleaning the edge connector and smearing it with petroleum jelly improves the mean time between failures — in my case from 15 to 45 minutes but the effective and permanent cure is to make the edge connector a rigid joint.

I have attached a rigid aluminium strip to the underside of the ZX 81 and this supports the underside of the RAM pack. With thicker sponge feet on the ZX 81, the RAM is then clear of the working surface and there is no flexing at the joint.



In the diagram, the gap at the rear of the supporting strip is to allow removal of the RAM, and is filled with flexible plastic or rubber tube when the RAM is in place. If the support strip is attached using screws and nuts, be careful that they do not project too far into the machine — the PCB is quite close.

I have spent an evening modifying the Lunar Landing program to improve the display, the speed of execution and screen update, the crash graphics which did not work, the orbital calculations which were not very accurate and the ease of control. Of course, the program is now larger but the end result is very different.

Incidentally, I have found that most reasonable games programs written with good graphics and clear instructions and designed to be crash-proof tend to occupy about 10 to 12K on the ZX 81 — Lunar Landing, Black Box, Yahtzee and Sheepdog for instance have all finished in this range.

For those who find that the Sinclair Combat program will not work without crashing the system, there are several invalid program lines in my version. Line 709 should read:

```
POKE 16437,255
```

Line 6012 should read:

```
LET MC=MC-1
```

Line 7091 has such severe corruption that any attempt to edit it crashes the machine. However, deleting this line number does work, and a new line 7092 appears as if my magic. Line 7091 can now be input as:

```
POKE 16437,255
```

My normal means of checking that an input number is, say, a positive whole number is to use the form:

```
100 INPUT X
110 IF ABS INT X <> X THEN GOTO 100
```

However, on the ZX 81 I suddenly discovered that if alphabetic keys are pressed they can be accepted. The system will accept them if they are the same as a previously dedicated variable, otherwise the program will terminate with an undefined variable error.

To make my programs foolproof now requires all input to be either Character or via the Inkey function, and validity checking of multi-digit numbers input via a character variable can be quite cumbersome.

More in store

ATOM

E J Harding
Cullompton, Devon

THIS PROGRAM is useful for storing large amounts of text — in this case, the upper text/graphics space. When typing in text using the program, care should be taken that words have enough space to be fitted on the rather small lines and do not overlap on to the next line.

Instead of using the delete key, use Ctrl h, as this will delete the unwanted characters from the memory, while delete only adds back spaces to the text.

To return from the typing-in mode, type Ctrl 1. The listing of the text is in the non-paged mode and to halt the printing of the text the Ctrl key should be pressed and the shift key resumes the output.

If you have the off board expansion RAM card fitted, the value of 'm' in line 10 should be altered to the start address of the expansion text space. This will reduce the screen noise, which results from accessing graphics memory when in or outputting text.

Running the program from a cold start "d" should be cleared of random contents by setting it to zero. To save the text on tape, first enter the immediate mode by typing Esc, then find the end address by typing:

```
P &d+&8201
```

then save the text by typing:

```
*save &200 XXX
```

where XXX is the number typed.

```
2   REM text files
4   *#81=0,F=#80
6   V=#21C,IV=#BOFE7128,V14=#22CC007 ,IB=#6#EA8185
8   V112=#F0DOFFA9 V116=#FEA74C08
10  M=#8200,R#BFFE3
12  P.$12 '(11 spaces)TEXT FILES'
14k IN. "WRITE/LOAD,REVIEW(W/L/R)"$F IF $F='N' D=0 G.c
16  IF $F='R' AND D 0 G.z
18  IF $F='W' P. "NO TEXT IN MEMORY",G.k
20  IN. "END ADDRESS OF FILE "D D=D+#U200
22  P."WIND TO FILE AND"
24  *LO.&200
26  G.a
30c IO
32+ LINK R,LINK ,IF ?#81=253 D.t
34  IF ?#81  13 G.v
36  D M=13
38  P.$13
40  D=D+1
42  D?M=10
44  P.$10
46  G.1
40u IF ?#81  8  G.a
50  I=D-1 P.$9
52  D.b
54k IF ?#81 =#1F G.b
56  D?M=?#81 P.$ #81
58-1 I=D+1
60b IF D=5000 P.$7
62  U.?#D1=17
64  P.$12
66k  IN. "REVIEW/CONTINUE/BEGIN(R/C/B)"$F
68  IF $F='C'  #E1=#80 G.c
70  IF $F='B' AND  #E1=0 G.c
72  P.$12 ?#E1=0
74z F.M=0 TO (I-1)
76  IF  #80.1  191 G.o
78  DU U  #8001=127
80  P.$W?M
82  N. G.a
```

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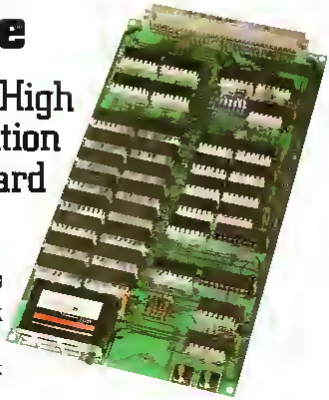

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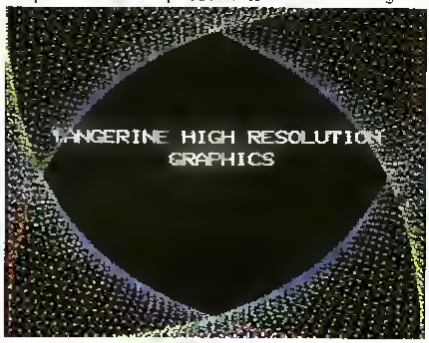

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If you want to set a competition for Competition Corner, remember that the simplest solution should be calculable by a short program rather than by any other form of reckoning.

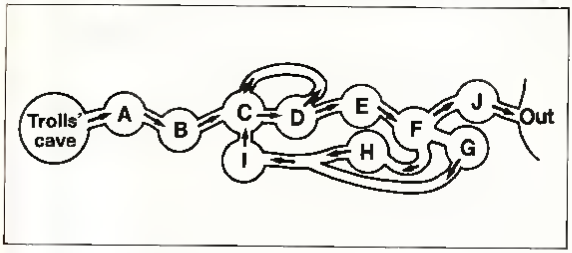
Trolls' cave

BY ANTHONY ROBERTS

YOU HAVE BEEN captured by the trolls of Zellers Hill and suspended in a cage over a pit of ravenous man-eating worms. You are fed well enough, but the smell of the worms is revolting. Your only chance to escape is on New Year's Eve, when the trolls let you down to join in the festivities, and just for fun, may make you run for your life at midnight through their cave system while they pile treasures on to you — or perhaps take some away.

You know for a certainty that should you walk out of the hill carrying any treasure, you will be set on and killed by the bandits waiting for you. So you must ensure that you loose it all before you leave. Of course, you make it. On what day of the week did you make your escape?

This is the cave system and the trolls' individual instructions for each cave: all passages are one way only.



Cave A — Gives you an amulet and five bracelets

Cave B — Gives you one more diamond than the new year — e.g., 80 diamonds in 1979, 86 diamonds in 1985

Cave C — Gives you as many coins as you have bracelets, but takes away as many diamonds as you have amulets

Cave D — Sends you down the left fork if you have fewer amulets than diamonds, else sends you to the right

Cave E — Gives you three more amulets

Cave F — Directs you left to the final cave if you have at least 10 amulets, straight on if you have less than five, and to the right otherwise

Cave G — Takes from you as many bracelets as you have amulets

Cave H — Gives you two coins

Cave I — Swaps each coin for a diamond, but takes any diamonds you walked into the cave with

Cave J — Takes all your amulets, bracelets, and coins, and just one diamond 'for good luck' — and kicks you out of the hill into the midst of the bandits' camp ■

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THE ZX81 COMPANION was reviewed in the September 1981 issue of the Educational ZX80/81 Users' Group Newsletter as follows

Bob Maunder's ZX80 Companion was rightly recognised to be one of the best books published on progressive use of Sinclair's first micro. This is likely to gain a similar reputation. In its 130 pages its author does not go as far as he did before, but his attempt to show meaningful uses of the machine is brilliantly successful.

The book has four sections with the author exploring in turn interactive graphics (gaming), information retrieval, educational computing, and the ZX81 monitor. In each case the exploration is thoughtfully written, detailed, and illustrated with meaningful programs. The educational section is the same — Bob Maunder is a teacher — and here we find sensible ideas, tips, warnings and programs too. The monitor listing (0000 to 0CB9), while unique, is less fully backed up, and will be of no use to the ZX81 beginner without some knowledge of Z 80 assembly.

To conclude — this book is definitely an outstandingly useful second step for the ZX81 user.

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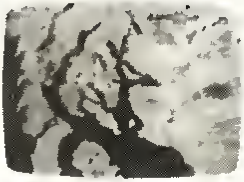

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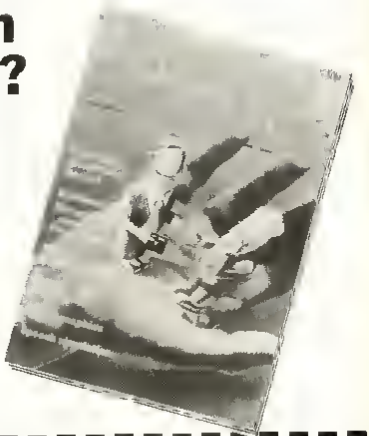

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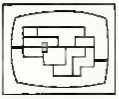

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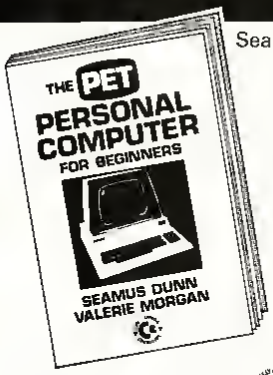

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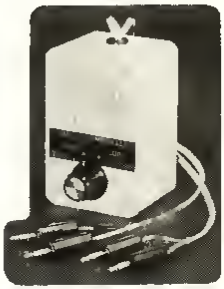

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